This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

21482.14.3

Harvard College Library

BOUGHT FROM GIFTS

OF

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

D

MARY RAYMOND,

AND

OTHER TALES.

BY

THE AUTHORESS OF

"MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS,"

&c., &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:
HENRY COLBURN, PUBLISHER,
GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.
1838.

21482.14.3

HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY
THE GIFT OF
FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY
Mar 22, 1930

By Mrs Catherine Grace Frances (Wood) Gore.

LONDON:
SCHULZE AND CO., POLAND STREET.

1820
43-198
39.3

CONTENTS

OF

THE THIRD VOLUME.

	Page.
St. John of the Island.	1
Dorathea	43
Verrex	61
Wine	92
Napoleon at Fontainebleau	129
Lady Evelyn's Three Trials	175
La Tarantata	209
Now or Never	259
Victoria	287
The Hair-Market of Evreux	308

ST. JOHN OF THE ISLAND.

ST JOHN OF THE ISLAND.

"The tapers shall be quenched, the belfries mute,
And mid their choirs unroofed by selfish rage,
The warbling wren shall find a leafy cage;
The gadding bramble hide her purple fruit:
And the green lizard and the gilded newt
Lead unmolested lives, and die of age."

Wordsworth.

THE monks were cunning caterers!—The monastic estate appears to have taken for its emblem the green olive of the Scriptures, "planted by the running waters," and to have been bent on accomplishing among the Gentiles the promises spoken to the Jews, by framing for itself a Caanan wherever milk and honey abounded in the land. The progress of unreformed Christianity through heathen Europe was, in fact, marked by the erection of certain Caravanserais, wherein the wanderers, its disciples, might set up their rest;—judiciously selected in spots where corn, wine, and oil were of almost spontaneous growth—where

clear streams supplied the requisite material for their luxurious abstinence—where green pastures afforded herbage for their flocks and herds—where, in short, they were enabled to approximate themselves with ease to Heaven, by creating temporal existence wherever "paradise was opened in the wild!"

In how many lands of wide-spreading Europe, for instance, do we find the ruined arch and crumbling altar-stone of by-gone conventual splendour sheltered by lofty groups of forest trees, and scattered upon green and mossy turf in the heart of some sequestered valley, through whose glassy stream the speckled trout dart gaily beneath the overhanging hazels, and where the remnants of the once fertile orchard lie basking in the sun, the musky fruit still sending forth from its moss-grown stumps an occasional sample of luscious quality. In such retreats, nature still proudly displays her warrant of abundance till we cease to wonder at the extent of the ruined granaries, threshing-floors, cider-presses, wine-presses, and other offices connected with the extinct establishment.

Plenty as well as peace seem to have abided with the chartered ascetics of ancient Christendom; and such places as Val-y-Crucis Abbey in the Vale of Llangollen—Fountains and Furness, in green England — the Convents of Laach,

in Rhenish Prussia—La Trappe, La Chartreuse, and fifty others in France,—are manifestly calculated to "draw an angel down" to share their

> Populous solitude of bees and birds,
> And fairy-formed and many-coloured things!

Among the fifty let us, however, especially distinguish a favourite spot—the Convent of St. John of the Island. About a stone's-throw from the Seine, just where the double branches of the river Juigne pour their abounding waters into the metropolitan stream—circumscribed by their fantastic course, so as to form a distinct island of verdure—lie a series of beautiful water-meadows, enamelled by an infinite variety of wild flowers, and in part entangled by thickets of underwood, bequeathed to the land by many a stately stem, fallen under the axe of the destroyer. On the extreme verge of these, so that the toppling wall of its watch-tower overhangs the sedgy channel of the Juigne, stand the ruins of St John of the Island;—an ancient Augustine monastery, converted to the service of the Order of Malta, and founded during her mysterious life of repudiation by Isemburge, the Danish wife so unceremoniously ejected from the bosom of Philip Augustus, to make way for fair Agnes of Merania.

And well and wisely did that royal devotee se-

lect the site of the dwelling she chose as the refuge of her earthly sorrows—her eternal rest. The monastery which for so many years concealed the tears of Isemburge, and subsequently for so many centuries her majestic tomb, lies niched within a verdant solitude, at that period uninvaded by the busy industry of the town of Essonne, or the rival prosperity of Corbeil. The stream which now imparts vitality to so many mills and engines (for the production of flour, floor-cloths, cotton, printed calicoes, as many and as various items as might figure advantageously in a Liverpool or Bristol invoice,) was then the lonely haunt of the king-fisher and the reed-tit. The neighbouring groves of *Chantemerle* (dating their insignificant antiquity from the reign of the chivalrous Francis I.) had not arisen to overtop the rustling abele-trees and flowering limes of St John of the Island. The monastery stood alone in its glory, listening to the ripple of its circumfluent waters, as they hurried in busy self-importance towards the Seine. At that period, the harmonious chants rising at day-dawn from its altars, were heard only by the vintagers as they plied their light labours along the *côte*, in the vineyards belonging to the neighbouring religious houses of St. Guénault and St. Exupère; and even when the Grand Master of the Order of St. John held his chapter three ages later in the mo-

nastery, it was still secluded—still intimately linked with the beauty and the solitude of nature.

Even now, though surrounded by human habitations and invaded by commercial industry, how singularly does the place maintain that aspect of loneliness!—Overgrown as it is with trees and luxuriant aquatic plants, silent, sad, secluded, the stranger wanders beside the ruined church without dreaming of its vicinage. Having crossed the bridge, under which the stream has been widened into a modern canal the banks of which are adorned with weeping-willows, dahlia-beds, and summer-houses, such as Batavia herself might envy, we saunter down a sombre avenue of limes, and behold an ancient portal, serving the daily use of an ordinary farm; nor is it till, attracted by shoals of fish and thickets of alder overgrown by the wild hop, we follow the channel of the brook into the fertile meadows, that we descry between the lofty trees, that granite skeleton of monastic pomp—the ruined church and monastery of St John of the Island.

Following the mossy bank till the waters of the Juigne can be crossed, let us step cautiously among the bramble and elder-bushes springing forth from heaps of rubbish where strange rustlings and hissings apprise us that we startle some obscene reptile from a long unmolested retreat

till entering the *enceinte* of the deserted burying-ground, we look up with reverence to the monastic roof; or down, with solemn contemplation, upon the broken grave-stones—some inscribed with quaint German devices—some with abbatial and even episcopal emblems, some uniting with the mitre, crosier, and hour-glass, the ghastly impress of a human skeleton surrounded by the symbolic insignia of ecclesiastical dignity. At length, having moralised our fill over the site from which queen, monks, knights—nay, even the memory of its dead, has disappeared—let us learn to invest these desecrated ruins with a new interest, derived from the following record of their modern fortunes.—

Previous to the revolution of 1789, one of the finest aristocratic residences on the banks of the Seine was the Château de Mousseaux, situated some five miles from the confluence of the Juigne, and inhabited by the Duchess of Cossé-Brissac. Of the Duc de Cossé too much is known to posterity, as the lover who succeeded Louis XV. in the arms of the infamous Du Barri—and as the victim whose gory head was thrown by the triumphant populace at the feet of the royal concubine, as she paraded the terrace of her pavilion at Luciennes; but of the Duchess—the serene, the suffering, the solitary Duchess—something remains to be indited. Deserted by a worthless libertine,

Madame de Brissac instead of plunging into the dissipations of the capital, retreated with decent self-respect to her palace on the Seine; seeking happiness in the cultivation of its beautiful gardens, and creating those lordly *charmilles* and proud arcades, which, divided and apportioned as they are, still create an interest for the plain, whence labyrinth and quincunx have disappeared, and where the colossal statue of Atlas, once forming the central point of their entanglement, stands in ludicrous isolation in the midst of a homely corn-field.

The Duchesse de Brissac, although deeply wounded by the neglect of her husband, was not in a position of life to fly to *utter* solitude. She had too many noble relatives, too many admiring friends, to be left alone; and the humility of true affection suggested that it were better to adorn her residence and enliven her society, in hopes to win back the truant to her presence—and perfect, with his approving suffrage, the charms of her favourite retreat. The best society of the capital was, accordingly, invited to grace her côterie. At Mousseaux, the Boufflers, Aiguillons, Choiseuls, Birons, and Grammonts, forgetting their political animosities, daily abounded; and all that was fair, young, gay, and graceful of the court of Marie-Antoinette was to be found in the circle of the Duchesse de Cossé-Brissac.

But there was one, unhappily, to be found there, whose presence was unconnected with court or courtier—one fair, even among its fairest—one graceful, even among its most accomplished—one ill-fated, even among the most unfortunate of its fore-doomed associates. CLARICE (what other name she had is too ignoble to be recorded,) Clarice, the hazel-eyed Clarice, was one of those victims of conventional tyranny called *demoiselles de compagnie*. Her beauty had proved her bane; for her beauty was the means of making her the inmate of the Château de Mousseaux. Twelve years before, the attention of Madame de Brissac had been attracted while rolling in her stately coach-and-six on a visit to the Countess de la Tour d'Aulnay, at St. Germain-en-Corbeil, by the loveliness of a little dirty, curly-haired brat, hanging to the apron of a woman who bore on her back a vintage-hod, and, with her brown right hand bestowed cuffs and thumps upon the child, who was too much struck by the fine equipage of the Duchess to get out of the way of the trampling horses. Clarice, in short, was slightly injured by the carriage-wheel; and the Duchess, having ordered her servants to stop and bestow a small gratuity upon the little sufferer, was so captivated by her artless graces, as to resolve upon her permanent adoption. Regarding her as no higher in the scale of creation than the animals of

her menagerie, Madame de Brissac conditioned for and *ordered home* the child, as she would have done a clever monkey or a parrot of handsome plumage, to increase the *agrémens* of the Château.

But poor Clarice was not happily organised for such a position. In defiance of Madame de Brissac's calculations, she had a heart to feel, a soul to reflect, as well as a sweet smile and graceful air to captivate the admiration of beholders. The first of these superfluous faculties soon made itself apparent in the adoration with which she regarded her benefactress; the second, as she grew in girlhood, developed itself only too acutely for her happiness in her mode of contemplating the false position in which destiny had placed her.

Admitted in the loveliness and playful peremptoriness of childhood to climb the knees and court the caresses of the illustrious visitors of the Duchess; she found, as she advanced towards maturity, that every additional day of her life drew her nearer to the menial degree. She was gradually recurring to her real situation in life; and the haughty servants of the condescending aristocrat, indignant at having been obliged to bestow their services on one whose birth was so inferior even to their own, took every occasion to mortify the village *parvenue*. Clarice found she must no longer aspire to the society of the great—that she

was not allowed to descend to the society of the little—that she was alone in the world!

Her uneducated mother, with whom once or twice a year Clarice was allowed an interview, considered, and assured her, that she was the most fortunate of human beings; inasmuch as "Madame la Duchesse had promised to *marry her* and give her a *dot*." But though this mode of settlement in life was the one in use throughout all degrees of French society from the Duke to the artisan, the feelings of Clarice rebelled against being "married" after the fashion so satisfactory to her mother.

"They will give me to the steward's son, or some clerk of Madame la Duchesse's notary," said the high-minded girl, whose notions of independance and refinement had been fostered in the society of lords, ladies, and ministers of state. "And even these half-educated men will be aware that they are doing an honour to the peasant's child, who has been bought upon their acceptance with a dowry! Their friends, their relatives, will receive with scorn the village-girl whom chance has raised out of the dust; and *there*, no less than *here*, I shall be alone against the contempt of those around me. Why have I not strength of mind to lay aside these fine clothes, and return to the humble station in which I was born?—Why cannot I reduce my desires to nature's level?—

Alas, alas! why rather did Madame la Duchesse ever raise me from my apportioned sphere?—Unfitted by my birth for my present station—unfitted by my present station for the sphere of my birth,—the purposes of my Almighty Creator seem to have been wantonly frustrated. Yet since it is His will to humiliate and chastise me, let me pray at least for a more Christian spirit of resignation, to reconcile me with my appointed trials."

But this spirit came not at her call. The rebellious tone of the supplicant who sought as for her own merits, obtained no favour in the sight of Heaven; while as she grew in years, Clarice became only more susceptible to the irritations of her situation. At length, a bitter source of evil mingled with the current of her destinies.

Among the habitual and most favoured guests of the château, was a nephew of Madame de Brissac, the younger and orphan son of a sister to whom she had been tenderly attached. The Vicomte d'Arnonville was a model of the best order of the ancient nobility of the unregenerated court of the Bourbons. Young, handsome, brilliant, ignorant, idle, vain, and self-complacent, Adolphe possessed the redeeming qualifications of courage, a high sense of honour, and a chivalrous courtesy of demeanour, which became almost a virtue in one so selfish and so indolent.

He was in every way endowed to fascinate the admiration of an inexperienced woman; and few were the women of the Court of Versailles whose attention he had not attracted. The young Viscount was not, however (for the times), a determined libertine. He was neither a Fronzac nor a Lauzun; perhaps because his self-love inspired him with a distaste for the incessant embarrassments and annoyances entailed upon the vocation of *un homme à bonnes fortunes.*

He allowed himself to be wooed, but was not *always* won; even his gallantry was tinctured with the listless but not uncalculating egotism of his mode of life. It sufficed, therefore, when, shortly after his return from a tour in Italy with his elder brother, the Prince d'Arnonville, he presented himself at Mousseaux, and first beheld the interesting *protégée* of the Duchess, it sufficed for his aunt to recommend Clarice to his forbearance, as a young person whom it was her intention to settle respectably in life, for Adolphe to limit his attentions within the bounds of common courtesy. He was more kind, indeed, more considerate, than the generality of those by whom the château was frequented; for the Viscount, naturally good-natured, was not in the habit of inflicting pain upon others unless where his own interests or convenience especially demanded the effort; and he was often at the

trouble of opening a door, closing a window, picking up a book, or even going in search of the Duchess's white spaniel, for the sake of receiving from Mademoiselle Clarice one of those bright sunshiny smiles with which she involuntarily recompensed his magnanimity.

It was not, however, these common-place civilities which blinded the eyes of the young *demoiselle de compagnie* to his defects, or induced her to "fancy merit where she saw it not." But the lowly-born was, as we have already noticed, highly and finely organized. She possessed all the instincts of a pure and delicate taste; and the graceful manners of Adolphe d'Arnonville—his refinement of voice and conversation—the playfulness of his wit—his sprightly mode of relating and commenting on the anecdote of the day, rendered his arrival at the château as much a holiday to herself as to Madame de Brissac.

In pursuance of the custom of disposing of the unportioned younger sons of the nobility, he had been engaged from his childhood in the Order of Malta, with a view to obtaining the Commandery of St. John of the Island, which, in former days, had been the appanage of his house. But he was not yet received a Knight. Certain irregularities of conduct were supposed to have placed a serious obstacle to his preferment; and it was rumoured in the household of Madame de Brissac, that the

object of her nephew's deference and assiduity was to cause himself to be nominated heir to her estates, and thus obtain a remission from his uncompleted vows. He was even said to have formed an attachment, rendering the prospects of a life of celibacy insupportable to his feelings.

All this did but augment the interest he had excited in the heart of Clarice. She now saw in him a victim—a victim like herself; and her whole sympathy connected itself with his fortunes. She had good reason to know that Madame de Brissac meditated no such disposal of her property as he was said to anticipate; and from the moment the tale of his passion and his projects, reached her ear, she could scarce refrain, while she noted the patient devotion of his time to the caprices and exactions of her benefactress, to whisper, "Seek some other mode of exemption from the restraints that await you. Exert yourself elsewhere to secure your happiness. The inheritance of the Duchess will never afford you a pretext of release from your vows as a Knight of St. John."

Clarice had, however, sufficient delicacy to feel that it was not for *her* to seek the confidence of a man of the age and condition of the Viscount. He returned, therefore, a frequent guest to the château, still to be the companion of her rides and walks with the Duchess. On the river, in

the beautiful forest of Sénart, among the lofty groves and *charmilles*, he was constantly by her side. He sang with elegance, talked with brilliancy; the very tone of his voice, and idiom of his discourse, betrayed the man of refinement. If Clarice might be termed a *chef-d'œuvre* of nature, Adolphe d'Arnonville exhibited the utmost perfection of art. The commonplaces of life derived a tone of originality from his mode of utterance; the most ordinary actions appeared embellished by his sprightliness; and Clarice fancied she had formed as intimate an acquaintance with the court and courtiers of Versailles from his frequent descriptions, as if she had passed her life in that region of splendour and futility.

With these sketches, there now began to intermix a thousand details which must have excited strong indignation in the mind of the Duchess, even had they not been related with the glowing energy characteristic of the political opinions of her nephew. The fermentation of the revolutionary leaven was beginning to be perceptible even at Versailles. The murmurs of the people had reached even unto the King's chamber; the eloquence of Mirabeau had roused the echoes of respondent Europe; and man was beginning to feel and assert himself man, whether festooned with a blue ribband, or with the rags of humiliating penury.

All this the Viscount related to admiration; sometimes with the bitter sneer of a courtier—sometimes with the angry eloquence of wounded pride. In all cases, the Duchess applauded with enthusiasm; and Clarice, though she did not applaud, was approvingly silent; for though her in-born soul was with the triumphs of the people, her heart was with the *homme de qualité* by whom those triumphs were held up to hatred or derision.

Meanwhile, the stir and tumult of the kingdom hourly increased; the emigration of the nobility commenced; and the King and Queen were held prisoners in their palace of the Tuileries. But the greater the danger incurred by the intemperate line of conduct pursued by young d'Arnonville, the more obstinate, the more chivalrous grew his adherence to the Royal cause. He adopted loyalty as a religion; and probably without anticipating (for who *did*—who *could* anticipate?) the fearful outrages consequent on the intoxication of freedom among the emancipated helots of the realm, already denounced the liberal party as plunderers and assassins. In vain did Clarice, by a few incidental words of remonstrance, attempt to moderate the rash fervour of his zeal. To tell him that he was incurring personal hazard to no good end, was but to inflame his anti-revolutionary ardour; and though she

implored him to be prudent for the sake of those who loved him if not for his own, the terms of the adjuration did not so much as excite his notice.

One circumstance, in all this, afforded some consolation to the *demoiselle de compagnie.* In the general disorganization which was beginning to confuse and confound all ranks of society, Adolphe was already brought nearer to her. The approximation was scarcely perceptible to any but herself. But *she* felt that he was now glad to secure a submissive companion, a patient auditor of his diatribes; *she* felt that his arm was now offered as her support during their prolonged promenades. Since his favourite coteries had been broken up and his idols dispersed, he was moved to perceive, for the first time, that the large hazel eyes which fixed themselves so sympathizingly upon his own while he related to the Duchesse de Brissac the humiliations of Marie-Antoinette, and the afflictions of Madame Elizabeth, were far more expressive than those of the most fashionable beauty of the noble Faubourg. He had not, in fact, conceived that a *roturière* could be so graceful; and began to inquire within himself whether noble blood might not, by some indirect means, flow in the veins of the *paysanne parvenue.*

At last came the trial of the King; and foremost among those imprudent partizans whose

vehemence endangered his cause was the Vicomte d'Arnonville. But he endangered not alone the royal cause; his own life was now in imminent peril, and his name on the lists of proscription. His only chance of safety remained in flight. A prudent, or perhaps a generous inspiration arrested his steps. The Duc de Brissac was already a captive in the clutch of the Jacobins; as the nearest kinsman to the Duchess as her heretofore assiduous cavalier, he felt that he could do no less than offer his services to her protection. Adolphe had been compelled to desert his habitation in the now spoliated and confiscated hotel of his brother, the Prince d'Arnonville, in the Rue de Lille; and the very atmosphere of the Faubourg St. Germain, where his person was as well known as the towers of St. Sulpice, would have been fatal to him. He had even some apprehension of making his appearance overtly in the quarter where he might procure a conveyance to Mousseaux; and it occurred to him that since disguise was now his only resource against detection, he might make his way on foot to the village of Bercy, under cover of night; and there, having procured the dress of a waterman, seek a passage in the first return stone-barge or wood-raft making its way up the Seine towards Burgundy; whence it would be easy to gain the shore, at the ferry of Ris or Evry.

The autumn was already far advanced; and Clarice, dispirited alike by the fearful aspect of public affairs, and the impaired health of her protectress, which rendered all agitation perilous, and a long journey impossible, began to shudder as she listened to every shrill blast whistling along the lofty arcades of Mousseaux. The lime-trees were already divested of their leaves; and the reddened foliage of the cloistral-looking avenues of chesnuts fell to the ground in crisp showers with every fresh eddy of the wind. Even the blue waters of the Seine bore against the opposite embankment of Soisy in curling waves that imparted a chilly, comfortless aspect to the autumnal landscape.

Three times since the commencement of the King's trial had the mansion of the Duchess been subjected to domiciliary visits on the part of the heads of the revolutionary committee sitting at Corbeil; and at the first of these, the beauty of the young *demoiselle de compagnie* had attracted the favourable notice of a certain citizen, named Marc-Antoine Delamarre, the son of an ex-steward of an ex-nobleman of the province of Champagne; who, perceiving that the denunciation of the Marquis, his seigneur, might afford a more lucrative return than even the habitual malversations of his stewardship, had sent his master to the scaffold, and his son into the fiercest ranks of republican convention.

But Marc-Antoine, though sanguinary and unprincipled, had a heart open as day, or as his classic namesake, to the influence of the fairer sex. For the sake of the pleading words of Clarice, accordingly, and still more for the sake of her hazel eyes, he had rendered his interrogation of the aristocrate of Mousseaux more forbearance than altogether became his functions; on his second visit he had openly avowed to the lovely mediatress the motive of his unwonted humanity, inviting her to desert the cause of the titled fools who despised her, and become the companion of an honest *sans-culotte;* and on the third, finding his proposition treated with silent contempt, had burst into a tirade of injurious invective, which unluckily had the effect of rousing all the hitherto repressed energies of his Cleopatra. It was not what he said of herself or *to* herself, that she resented; but his menaces against Madame de Brissac were accompanied by so gross and groundless a vilification of her character, that the grateful Clarice could no longer subdue her indignation. She knew that whatever might be the corruptions of the Court, the life of her benefactress was blameless; and boldly challenging the insolent accuser, excited against herself such a complication of rage and passion, that her danger was now equally urgent from the love or hatred of her adversary. For that time,

however, she was safe. The instructions of Delamarre were not such as to authorize him in the arrest of Madame Brissac or her *protégée*. He therefore contented himself with uttering threats for the future.

It was on the day following this frightful scene that Clarice, having escaped from the heated atmosphere of the *boudoir* of Madame de Brissac to refresh herself with momentary respiration of purer air and collect her thoughts in solitary self-communion,—was pacing, with agitated steps the labyrinth adjoining the river, when she perceived one of the rush rafts, so common at that place and season, suddenly pause opposite the gardens, and steer towards the shore.

A minute afterwards, a man, habited in the vest and broad straw-hat of a fisher of the Seine, leaped on shore; and while the raft was punted back towards the current of the stream, she saw him descend into the fosse of the *saut-de-loup* surrounding the park, and having, with great agility ascended the opposite wall, make his way towards the terrace.

Clarice stopped short, and trembled. It was not that, for a moment, she dreaded to discover Marc Antoine in the person of this mysterious intruder. The eyes of affection have a searching glance; and, in a moment, she had detected the gallant, gay Adolphe, under the sordid weeds of his dis-

guise. When, therefore, he advanced familiarly towards her, and, trusting to the high espaliers of the labyrinth to screen them from observation, drew her arm under his, pressed the trembling hand that lay upon his sleeve, and whispered the tale of his danger, the tale of his devotion,— in a tone very different from that of his usual sprightly impertinence, — Clarice could scarcely refrain from blessing the misfortunes which seemed to have extinguished the painful inequality between them.

Dear as was young Arnonville to his noble kinswoman, his arrival, though prompted by such generous motives, seemed but to add to her perplexities. An ancient maître-d'hôtel of her neighbour, the Duchesse de Bourbon, had been dispatched back to Petit Bourg by that considerate friend, to be the guide of her projected flight to the frontier; and she foresaw that a guardian so impetuous as Adolphe would but augment the perils of the journey. Nevertheless, she could but gratefully thank his intended services, more particularly when they were again and again pointed out by Clarice to her admiration; and it was finally agreed among them that, on the following evening, the Duchess and Clarice, with the Viscount disguised as a postilion, should quit the château, *en calèche*, as if for an ordinary excursion; proceed with their own horses as far

as Etampes, where their persons were unknown, obtain relays of post-horses, and proceed onward towards the coast.

This plan satisfactorily arranged, Madame de Brissac related to her nephew the eventful history of the insults they had recently undergone; enlarging with much eloquence upon the passion kindled by Clarice in the susceptible breast of Citoyen Marc-Antoine Delamarre; and the burst of rage with which the announcement of his pretensions was received by Adolphe, might almost seem to justify the flush of delight and triumph with which every flattering word that fell from his lips was treasured up by his devoted votaress.

Mistaking the excitement with which the eventfulness of the times had animated his listless demeanour for the first expansion of a more liberal frame of mind, she fancied herself becoming dear to him; she fancied that, when the deluge of the revolution should subside, all things on earth would be found reduced to the level of nature, and that the frame of society in France could not again renew its artificial distinctions. Never had poor Clarice been so happy as on that evening of consternation, when, seated beside the sofa of Madame de Brissac, with Adolphe

at her feet, they formed wild projects for the future, as if their destinies were inextricably interwoven.

But at a very early hour on the following morning, a new alarm spread through the château. A young man, employed in the *octroi* of Corbeil, whose appointment had originated in the interest of Madame de Brissac, had been moved by feelings of gratitude to give them furtive information that they were about to be subjected to a fourth domiciliary visit; and that Delamarre, forewarned of their flight, had determined to arrest them.

The first idea of Clarice on obtaining this painful intelligence, was the concealment of Adolphe d'Arnonville, for *his* name was actually on the lists of proscription;—*him* Delamarre would be amply justified in consigning to the hands of the law; and five minutes sufficed to immure him in one of the vaults of the château, originally destined to receive the produce of the extensive vineyards formerly attached to the domain.

When, at mid-day, Marc-Antoine actually made his appearance at the head of his detachment, the poor girl felt satisfied, that whatever calamities might befal herself, the object of her affections was secure.

"Look ye, *Citoyenne* would-be aristocrat!" cried Delamarre, seizing the arm of Clarice, as

she was about to take her station beside the Duchess while the château was submitted to the ordinary search for arms and suspected persons; "I have obtained due warning of your projected emigration. If the examination now instituting by my people should afford any shadow of grounds for your arrest,—nay, should it not, but at my own hazard and instigation,—I will consign both you and your mistress to the revolutionary tribunal of Corbeil, which has already sent the decapitated carcases of so many titled traitors floating yonder into Paris, to rejoice the sight of the good patriots of the Grêve. In pity, however, to your youth and folly, I first offer you once more the means of redemption. Be mine, and the old woman yonder may make her way towards her kindred in emigration without obstruction or hindrance. You call yourself grateful, Citoyenne Clarice. I give you an occasion to save the life of her who, from your childhood, has fed you, clothed you, loved you—and yet you hesitate!"

"My poor Clarice!" faltered the Duchess, casting a wistful eye upon the young girl, whom she affectioned as a pet and companion, but by no means so dearly as to overcome the selfish terrors of her own heart.

"Decide! young woman," cried Delamarre, "the alternative will not long exist to perplex

you;" and taking a roll of papers from his vest, he proceeded to fill up a blank warrant of arrest with her own name and that of the ex-Duchess.

"Grant me but till this hour to-morrow for decision!" cried Clarice, with a look of wan despair, and having already taken a desperate resolution. "Since I must needs part from my generous benefactress, afford me at least one day to gain courage for our eternal separation."

And Marc-Antoine, better informed perhaps than she imagined as to her motives for the request, jerked his papers back into his pocket with a significant smile; and, after a moment's communication with the sergeant of the municipal guard, sneeringly announced his acquiescence in the demand of Clarice. He informed her, with an air half-tender, half-contemptuous, that, at the meridian hour the following day, he should return to seek his bride—or his victim;—and straightway departed, not judging it necessary to acquaint her that three of his men were posted in the premises, to keep due watch over the movements of the château.

At nightfall, accordingly, Clarice, satisfied that they were once more secure from observation, ventured forth into the corridors, and, escorted by the old steward, descended the concealed staircase to liberate her beloved prisoner. But, lo! a rude hand was laid upon her shoulder as

she placed her key in the stone door of the vault, and a gruff voice thanked her for having yielded a clue to the secret which the citizen Delamarre was so intent on discovering.

Having summoned by a shrill whistle his brethren in authority, the sergeant, whose *ruse* was successful, had little difficulty in forcing the door against the resistance of Adolphe; and the promiscuous discharge of the pistols with which the prisoner had been provided by the care of Clarice, unfortunately produced no other effect than that of inflicting a severe wound upon that generous protectress! The poor girl lay on the pavement of the vault, bathed in blood, while Adolphe, overpowered by numbers, was captured, and heavily ironed. The aid of the servants of the house was requisite, indeed, to remove her from the fatal spot—not yet, however, so insensible to all that was passing around her as not to hear with distinctness the parting apostrophe of Arnonville:—

"Clarice, dearest Clarice! make no sacrifice you are likely to repent. Let not the danger of your friends impel you into a rash and miserable marriage!"

"He is not indifferent, then, to my fate!"—murmured she, as she lay writhing on the bed of pain, waiting the arrival of the surgeon summoned to her assistance. "Ah! when I thought he

cared no more about me than for the spaniel sporting at his feet, even then I would not for a moment have placed my own happiness in competition with his safety; but now what would I not do, not suffer for his sake?"

A few hours afterwards, and while yet labouring under the harassing effects of her wound, the immolation of Clarice was completed. She had signed an engagement with Marc-Antoine Delamarre to become his wife so soon as her restoration to health might admit; and to accompany him to St. John of the Island, the ruins of the abbey being converted by the Conventional Government into a *poudrière*, or powder-mill, under the direction of their good and faithful servant the Citoyen Delamarre, to whose domicile was assigned the adjoining mansion of the Knight Commander of the Order.

Clarice scarcely shuddered when she reflected on this fatal promise; for thanks to the promptitude of her self-sacrifice, Madame de Brissac and her nephew were already safe on the road to the frontier, with the connivance of Delamarre. There had been no farewell interview between Adolphe and his kinswoman, and the generous Clarice. The Duchess protested she had not courage to witness the agony which was the price of her redemption from bondage; and Clarice

scarcely desired to augment her own misery by the pangs of parting.

* * * * *

A year from that afflicting moment had passed away. Arnonville was fighting with the armies of Condé, Madame de Brissac telling her beads in the gloomy walls of Holyrood: the Château de Mousseaux levelled with the ground; its gardens devastated; its fine woods sold for the benefit of the nation. Blood had been poured forth like water from one end of revolutionised France to the other; whole families were swept away; and the grave-yards of the *Madeleine* and *Innocens* were fattened with the multitudes of dead.

But Clarice still lived,—if life that could be termed, which was estrangement from herself. From the day of the Duchess's departure, her mind had never been wholly coherent. She was aware, indeed, of the sufferings that had befallen her; but, sometimes, she appeared to know more, sometimes less, than the truth. Yet by some strange perversity, the passion of Delamarre seemed only to increase with her infirmity. He had consulted the best physicians in her behalf, and received an assurance that the mind, disordered in its faculties by the strong emotions of some great crisis, is often by a second crisis restored to tranquillity.

Clarice was about to become a mother; and it was augured that the strong excitement of her new position might suddenly recal her scattered wits. She was what is termed "harmless:" betrayed her aberration of intellect only by an unmeaning ill-timed laugh, or some disjointed apostrophe; and Delamarre, still cherishing a hope that she might one day recover, and reward his forbearance and assiduity by becoming an affectionate and complacent wife, was too well satisfied to retain the power of gazing upon her delicate and now almost etherial loveliness to suffer her to be removed to a place of confinement. Two rooms, overlooking the gardens of the Abbey were devoted to her use, and a nurse appointed to watch over her movements.

The time for her deliverance approached, and at length a fair girl nestled in the unconscious bosom of the lunatic. But reason returned not with the formation of this new and potent tie to life and happiness. Clarice laughed as wildly and strangely as ever when the innocent creature was tendered to her embraces; and when consulted what name should be enregistered as that of her daughter, she answered with a vacant smile, "Call her Adolphe—call her Adolphe!"

Delamarre was fortunately not present to witness this disappointment of his expectations

with respect to the influence of the birth of his child upon his wife's recovery. For some weeks he had been compelled to leave the direction of the *poudrière* almost entirely in the hands of his foreman, and absent himself from the island for the execution of other official duties.

The Reign of Terror was at its climax; and every day he received rebukes from those in authority, for the mildness with which his crusade against the aristocrats was prosecuted. The names of Brissac and Arnonville were specially enumerated in the charges brought against his zeal in the good cause; and it appeared that his own sole chance of escape from denunciation lay in increased severity of creed and action. He began to foresee the probability of falling under a sentence such as he had often been the means of fulfilling towards others, and scarcely dared to return to the lofty shades and green meadows of the island-convent; and had seen Clarice but once since the birth of their child.

It was remarkable that though the invalid, by a vague air of restlessness and inquiry, demonstrated her consciousness of his absence, she never inquired into the cause. For many months she had ceased to betray impatience of his attentions, and was evidently imperfectly aware of his identity. She knew him not as the enemy of her benefactress,—the captor of her lover,—the

husband of her sorrow;—she saw in him only an assiduous friend, ever at hand to obey her summons and assuage her sufferings. She bore with him—she almost loved him; not, it is true, as Marc-Antoine Delamarre, but as the being kindest among those by whose kindness she was now surrounded. Yet among them, there was one whose devotion was of no common kind, for the woman selected by Delamarre to watch over his afflicted Clarice—was her mother.

Ten days had elapsed since the birth of the infant, and Clarice was just able to totter round her apartment, and look forth anew upon the face of nature. The summer was nearly at an end, but there was still perfume enough in the atmosphere of the gardens, and freshness enough in the foliage of the groves, to gratify her languid eyes. She began to miss something from her accustomed companionship.

"He is not here!"—faltered she, gazing mournfully in the face of her mother. "It is long since he was here. When will he come again?"

"Of whom are you speaking, *ma chérie*?" inquired the old woman.

"Of *him*—of Adolphe!" replied Clarice, (for she had acquired a habit of calling every thing, and every one that pleased her by the name of Arnonville.) "Doubtless they have discovered him—arrested him. He is in the dungeons of

Mousseaux, mother, — let us go in search of him."

Aware that the poor maniac adverted to her husband, and expecting from hour to hour the return of Delamarre, the old woman contrived to pacify her for a time; but towards evening, as she was sitting musing beside the open window, the bells of St. Spire and St. Leonard of Corbeil—then converted into infantry barracks —suddenly rang out, as if in proclamation of some occasion of public rejoicing.

" Something great and good has happened!" cried Clarice, starting up; " I hear at a distance the acclamations of the people!—Adolphe has escaped."

" What can have occurred?" ejaculated the old woman; and putting forth her head from the window, she called aloud to the workmen, who, although the powder-mill was closed at dusk, often loitered about the premises on errands of their own.— But no answer! not a soul was stirring!

Again the bells struck up a merry peal; and, excited as she was by the joyous sound, the infirm mother of Delamarre's wife little suspected how glorious were the tidings which produced these public demonstrations; that Robespierre was no more—that the Reign of Terror was at an end! The intelligence had just reached Cor-

beil, and young and old were pouring forth into the streets and market-place with mutual congratulations.

" She is quiet enough to-night;—I will just step down to the offices, and inquire the meaning of all this joy and tumult," muttered the old woman to herself, when even her imperfect hearing was startled by the shouts of the distant multitude, and having uttered an imperative injunction upon Clarice not to quit the apartment during her absence, (the surest mode by which she could have pointed out to the maniac that she was accidentally at liberty,) the old woman locked the door and stole down stairs, promising to return in a moment. But the offices to which she repaired were solitary—there was not a single soul on the premises; and having left Clarice musing and melancholy, safe in her nursing-chair, the inquisitive old lady assured herself that no harm could arise from her hastening through the cemetery towards the mill at the extremity of the island, to prosecute her inquiries. " The poor child wants so sadly to know the cause of all this bell-ringing!" was her apology to herself for her indiscretion; and away she scudded under the trees, enchanted at the prospect of a moment's gossip with *la mère Pinson,* at the mill.

The first object that struck her on arriving there (revealed by the light streaming from the

windows, upon the little wooden bridge crossing the Juigne) was the person of her son-in-law.

"*Que diable fais-tu ici?*"—was his instant salutation—an invocation which, but for her terror of the violence of her son-in-law, she might have been content to reiterate. "What was *he*, so long absent, doing there at last?"

"I came at the request of Clarice, to ascertain what was going on," said she checking herself; "and now let us return to the house."

"At the request of Clarice?—Heaven be thanked!—She is then sufficiently restored to feel an interest in what is going on around her!—For once the Doctors were right."

"Not altogether, I fear," faltered the old woman in reply; "our poor child can scarcely yet be said to enjoy the right use of her senses. Yet on such topics——"

"You have not surely left her *alone?*" cried Delamarre, as they were traversing the young plantation of poplars leading to the boundary wall of the cemetery.

"She was so calm, so tranquil, this evening that I considered——"

"*Did* you leave her *alone?*"—persisted Delamarre, in a voice of thunder. "Speak out!"

"I *did* then; but——"

"Infernal fool!"—ejaculated the agonised

husband, hastening his steps; "how dared you neglect my orders?"

But on reaching the wall of the churchyard leading to the commander's house, a spectacle was before him that suspended the words of imprecations on his lips!

Extending from the second story of his house to a range of offices—formerly the farm-sheds of the convent, but for some time past serving as a temporary powder-magazine—was a massive but ruinous wall, part of that portion of the Abbey of St. John which was demolished on the ejection of the monks. At the farther extremity was a tower, partly standing at the present day, said to have been used as a prison for recalcitrant brethren of the Order; and on the summit of this wall, bending, or, rather, climbing, her way towards the dilapidated turret, stood Clarice, holding a lighted taper in one hand, and, with the other, folding closely around her the white draperies of her night-dress. On discovering herself alone, engrossed as she was by the fixed idea of going to deliver Adolphe from his imprisonment, she had escaped by a window leading to the wall; and, thanks to the aërial lightness of her attenuated figure, and the rash security of her unshrinking steps, had hitherto escaped destruction.

Delamarre perceiving, in a moment, that a miracle alone could save her, felt with a sad and sudden conviction that of such a miracle he was wholly undeserving! He dared not even raise his voice to Heaven to sue for its mercy in the preservation of his wife! All he could do was to seize the old woman with imperious violence, and clasp his hands over her mouth, to prevent the utterance of a single outcry that might be fatal to her child.

The night was dark;—and the taper, burning in the hands of Clarice, derived a sort of unnatural brilliancy from the contrast of its gloom. It was still, too, as it was obscure—scarcely a breath of air was stirring among the lime-trees; and Delamarre could distinctly hear the bricks of the ruined wall displaced and falling to the earth at every step hazarded by the poor lunatic! Never had her sweet countenance appeared more lovely to him than now, when irradiated by the strong light of that solitary taper; for her looks were brightened by the sweetest of smiles;—she was happy—she fancied herself once more in pursuit of Adolphe!

So entrancing was the perturbation of Delamarre, as he stood with his eyes fixed on that appalling apparition, that even had he not known that the preservation of Clarice depended upon her not being startled, he was incapable of utter-

ing a single syllable. His heart was swelling with hope almost to suffocation, for already Clarice had attained more than midway of her hazardous career; and she was now passing over the sheds serving as magazines, which, were she to fall, must necessarily break her descent and diminish her peril. But, mercy of mercies!—a new danger now presented itself.—The lighted taper! The powder!—

Scarcely had this fearful notion occurred to Delamarre, when a shock as of an earthquake, laid him and his companion prostrate on the earth; while, high in air—so high as to be perceptible as far as Choisy on one side and Melun on the other—rose a burst of impetuous flame, reddening the heavens as with an announcement of the wrath of God!

Just as poor Clarice attained that portion of the ruins overhanging the magazine, the bells of St. Spire had unfortunately renewed their joyous peals, and her irrepressible start at the sound proved fatal! The overthrow of her taper on a spot used by the workmen for packing canisters of powder, produced a fatal ignition communicating to the vast store of barrels in the shed beyond, and in an instant the roar of the detonation announced that all was over.

* * * * *

The blackened and defaced walls of the Church

of St. John of the Island, still announce the dread event by which their ruin was accomplished; and in a gloomy corner of the old cemetery, overshadowed by the drooping boughs of an ancient chestnut-tree, is a small mound—greener than the rest of its turf—which covers the fair corse rescued by Delamarre, after many days' exertion, from the ruins. Horror-struck by the miseries provoked by his ungovernable passions, Delamarre, immediately after the interment, sent in his resignation of the post of Director of the republican-powder mill of St. John of the Island; and departed with his infant child to a distant part of the country. When next he was heard of at Corbeil, he was married again—prudently—wisely—and the father of two sons.

And now that the events of the first Revolution are forgotten in the hopes and promises of a second, those sons, redeemed from their father's ignominy by the purchase of a *savonette à vilain*, enjoy titles, wealth, distinction, in the gay circles of the French metropolis. They know nothing of the young sister who lived not to share with them their father's inheritance; still less of the beautiful — the gifted — the sacrificed Clarice Delamarre—who sleeps in the secluded cemetery beside the water of the Juigne. In the brilliant coteries of the Faubourg St. Honoré—in the *foyer* of the Italians—at Tortoni's—at the Salon—

they sometimes meet the infirm Duc d'Arnonville, who, by the death of his brother, succeeded some years ago to that title. Surprised by the eagerness with which the antediluvian libertine fixes his gaze upon them, they naturally attribute his inquisitorial glances to the excellence of their tailors, and of their own good taste.

How could it occur to such men, that their importance in the eyes of the favourite of Charles X. might be traced to a little heap of mouldering dust in the cemetery of ST. JOHN OF THE ISLAND.

DORATHEA.

DORATHEA.

It may be
That I can aid thee.
Manfred. To do this, thy power
Must wake the dead, or lay me low with them.
Byron.

I AM, as your conjectures have rightly assured you, of British origin; ay!—and in its highest degree;—nobly born and nobly bred. There was a time too, when flattering voices assured me that the blood of the Herberts spoke in my air, in my lofty brow, in my sternness of eye and lip; but since I have been a dweller in this land of exile, all consciousness of unavailing dignity has quailed into the drooping of despair. I dare not meet the searching eye of Heaven—why should I presume to brave the scrutiny of my fellow men? —I have fallen beneath them; my glory has departed from me!

We were very young—my sister Dorathea and myself—when our mother died; leaving us to become the consolation of the kindest of fathers, the Lord Herbert of Wrocksley; a stanch and valued adherent to the falling cause of King James. I was scarcely ten years old when we stood together sobbing beside his knee in our black weeds; but little Dora was seven years my junior; and the innocent smiles of infancy soon came shining through her tears, when our father bade me take her to me to be my child, and watch over her with a mother's heeding, I was proud of my charge,—and I loved her too; for Dora was then and ever, the fairest and gentlest thing that could be moulded into a human form. My sweet, sweet sister!—how good and how fair she was!—

My father willed not that we should too early encounter the enfeebling atmosphere of London. His own residence in the metropolis was that of a true courtier, arbitrary and repining; but his frequent visits to Wrocksley Court, where our childhood and youth were passed, enabled him to note with accuracy his children's development of strength and accomplishment: I will not say our *mental progress* for the inborn faculties of the mind defy such transitory observation. The rashness of his confidence, indeed, announced a deficiency either of penetration or opportunity. Un-

conscious of the despotic character of my disposition, he continued to place my little sister rather under my guidance than that of our common preceptress, Mistress Shirley; a weak and interested woman, in whose estimation my heirship to my father's lands, as well as my precocity of talent, afforded me a most undue recommendation. Dora was timid, and somewhat feeble in constitution: her voice was low, her step tremulous; her eyes, when harshly addressed, instantly suffused with tears. But then her smiles were of the same quick prompting;—and when she flung back the fair hair from her mild blue eyes, her looks had all the soothing promise of the rainbow.—Yes! Sweet sister, thou wert indeed holy and beautiful as the visible bond of a divine covenant.

I was just eighteen when my father, anxious for my appearance at court, even under the unpropitious aspect which it had already began to wear, removed me by the most unnatural transition from the lonely seclusion of Wrocksley, to the brilliant orgies of Whitehall. Yet I was not dazzled by the novelty of my position. My haughtiness of heart rendered me superior to the influence of flattery, the strength of my pride preserved me from the weakness of vanity.

You will readily believe that, gifted with my advantages and protected by the lavish favours of the king, I had many suitors. It was my

destiny however, to be addressed by those only whom I regarded with indifference—indifference tempered in some instances by contempt,—in others, by aversion. The Lady Miranda Herbert was spoken of, and written of and sighed for as the leading beauty of the court:—she was adored, but it was with that love which is akin to hatred. Her ungentle scornfulness was manifest even to her worshippers: nay, when the young Lord Lovel withdrew his suit from my harsh rejection, he was moved to exclaim in parting bitterness, "Miranda! the affection you despise will one day be avenged!"—In my triumph I laughed his menaces to scorn;—but, wo is me! they were not uttered in vain.

I can scarcely remember through what chance of society I first became acquainted with Sir Wilmot Worsley. There was nothing sufficiently striking in his appearance to have attracted my interest had he addressed me in the deferential terms to which I was accustomed; but while his appointment in the queen's household necessarily insured our meeting at all the festivals of the court, I perceived that the personal charms so incessantly hymned in my ears were powerless to draw him into the little circle of my votaries. In him, my vanity encountered its first obstacle; and I was too much of a woman not to determine upon surmounting, at any cost, so determined

an opposition. I conquered too—but my victory was dearly bought. In the progress of my attempt, I became aware that the eyes I had seen fixed with coldness or disapprobation upon my own demeanour, were occasionally animated by the most varying and intellectual expression; that the address which had been directed so calmly, so regretfully to myself, was graced at other times by the most refined perfection of courtly breeding; that Worsley's low intense voice was in itself a captivating music; and that the words of its breathing were ineffaceable from the hearts of those to whom they were addressed with fervour. My hour, in short, was come. I loved him!—and with the deeper and the purer interest, that I was long uncertain of the nature of his feelings towards me.

I was long in doubt, I repeat, of the character of Worsley's feelings; but it was the doubting of a woman's heart,—sanguine and restless, and varying with the alternate caprices of hope and confidence. He never, indeed, *said* that he loved me; but it was at *my* side he rode in the ring; it was *my* hand that he still claimed in the midnight masking; it was to commune with *me* only that he lingered, when the royal barges swept by moonlight over the Thames during the summer nights. It is true that he was often abstracted and inattentive; but the scattered words

of his lips came tempered with a grace and an interest unknown to the flippant loquacity of others.

Meanwhile, the state of public affairs wholly withdrew my father's observation from myself and my attachments; and even when he addressed Sir Wilmot, their conversation turned upon the intrigues of the protestant faction, of the popular and unfeeling pertinacity of the queen. For myself, engrossed by the influence of a new feeling, I remained wholly and strangely unconscious of the critical position of my native country; and throughout the extent of England, there probably existed not a person upon whom the final blow of the Revolution fell with a more startling abruptness than myself,—under whose very eyes the wires had been affixed to its state puppets.

My father hesitated not to follow the fortunes of a prince whose errors he deplored; but to whom, although himself of the reformed church, he felt his loyalty devoted beyond the intervention of sectarian zeal. And I, even if Sir Wilmot Worsley had not been destined to share the exile of his king—how cheerfully, how rejoicingly, would I have accompanied my indulgent and partial parent to his retreat at St. Germain's? But in Lord Herbert's opposition to my entreaties for permission to share his flight, he was for the first time absolute. He bade me return to

Wrocksley, and become a protectress to his orphan Dorathea, trusting to better times for our reunion. He cared not, he said, that his daughters should be apportioned as the prize of some needy papist; he chose that *we*, at least, should remain true to our country and its established creed; and placing us audibly under the protection and blessing of Heaven, Lord Herbert departed with his master; thus abandoning his private for his public duties. —Verily he had his reward!—

Even as my father's resolve had decreed, I returned to that home wherein Dora had been sporting away her happy hours of childhood; I returned, and oh! with how changed a spirit! At once refined and humiliated,—elevated and degraded,—I was touched as by a wizard's wand, into the tenderest and sweetest charities of womanhood. My look, my voice, my bearing were no longer the same: like the statue of the ancient sculptor, my obduracy was softened by the soul within;—I loved!—and with the doubting of an humbled, heart.

Had I been assured of Worsley's affection,—had we parted in the plighted confidence of lovers, such was my trust in his nobleness of heart and hand, that during his absence I should not have endured one single uneasy hour. But it was not so.—His attentions had been but those of a friend and a brother; he was deeply involved in the disas-

trous troubles of the times; he had gone forth into voluntary exile,—and how might the recollection of Miranda prevail against the active interests in which his feelings and his fortunes were now engaged?—He might forget me—perhaps had already forgotten me!—and I—there was not an opinion,—a word,—a look of his,—that I did not treasure within my heart of hearts. The echoes of his voice,—I seemed to hear them in my solitude;—the fastidious delicacy of his principles, which had rendered so many things worthless in my sight;—the cold, but high-bred elegance of his demeanour,—all haunted my remembrance, till I scorned myself for such abject worship of one who had given me no right to make him the god of my idolatry.—I scorned myself; yet still I went on loving as before!

I had none to whom I could disclose the conflict of my mind. I have said that our preceptress was a weak and frivolous woman; and Dorathea was yet too much of a child to be intrusted with my secret.—I should have regarded it as pollution to breathe the name of love in ears so pure and so unsuspecting as hers.

Meanwhile, the time passed on. Years were added to years, and still my father was detained in exile; and while I devoted my solitary hours to the care and maintenance of his estate, as well as to the perfecting of Dorathea's education, my

youth ebbed imperceptibly away; and, absorbed by an engrossing interest, I remained unconscious of the gradual decay of my beauty. I knew that I had improved in every quality sanctified by Worsley's approbation; that I had cultivated each gift and each virtue of his choice; and as to mere personal loveliness, he had seemed to hold it so lightly that I had long become indifferent to its possession.

But although my father's peculiar position, as well as my own inclinations, determined me to remain buried in the strict seclusion of Wrocksley Court, I own I was gratified by an opportunity afforded through the kindness of a near relation of my deceased mother, to acquaint my young sister in some slight measure with the diversions of the capital; and scarcely had she departed for London, leaving me to dream away my solitude during her absence, when one evening,—one calm fragrant, spring evening,—I saw a stranger of noble and familiar aspect advancing along the green alley leading to my garden bower; and in another moment,—Worsley himself was beside me!—The beating of my heart had not misled my expectations. He was the bearer of a letter from my father, authorizing him to become our inmate. "Mistress Shirley's protection," wrote Lord Herbert, "will be a sanction to Wilmot's temporary residence at Wrocksley; inasmuch as

he is already my son by adoption and affection—a tie I trust to see eventually confirmed by his marriage with a beloved daughter."

With my father's letter in my bosom, and Worsley at my side, judge whether I was happy! judge whether the soul-sickness of those long years of absence was overpaid!

I could not but observe that Sir Wilmot was duly sensible of the alteration which time, and the chastening of sorrow, had wrought in my disposition; that he regarded me with something of an exulting tenderness, as if conscious of having been instrumental in the change. Nor did my amended prospects and actual happiness tend to re-cloud my brow, or chill my frank, joyous, yet subdued demeanour. There was not one jarring thought within my mind, one discordant feeling within my heart, as day after day I sat by Worsley's side beneath the green and shadowy shelter of the Wrocksley beech-woods;—listening to his prolonged details of the exiled court, or claiming his interest, in turn, for my description of Dora's innocent beauty and elegance of mind, or my eager anticipations of my father's speedy and prosperous return.

One evening, succeeding by many weeks his arrival, while the saloon in which we were sitting was obscured by the creeping summer twilight, and we were indulging in that happy

interchange of thought and feeling which summer and twilight render so intimately and sacredly confidential, occasionally interrupting ourselves by a few faint chords of the lute that lay upon my knee,—the door of the chamber suddenly flew open, and Dorathea stole into my arms. I started at the sound of her sweet voice,—and so did Worsley, who was seated by my side; but when, beneath the officious lights which were now introduced into the gloomy apartment, Dora's sylph-like, pure, and tranquil beauty became revealed, he was motionless with delighted surprise.

At the first glance I enjoyed this emotion;—at the second an abyss of horror and agony seemed opened at my feet! Amid all the varying expressions I had heretofore recognised in his mutable countenance, I had never detected the rapt, the luxurious ecstacy of admiration which now thrilled from his eyes, and streamed upon his cheek. —My future destiny seemed written there in characters of fire.—

I seized the first pretext to escape into my own chamber—to rush with frenzied haste to the tiring-mirror on my toilet—and, lo! I beheld myself for the first time reflected in the terrible portraiture of truth!—Distorted by passion,—bewildered by terror,—I saw each altered feature withering under the touch of time and prolonged

anxiety. I saw my youth faded by the tears I had shed—*for him*;—I saw my quivering lips blanched by the anticipations of those which yet awaited me;—while a still small voice reiterated in my ears,—"He will forsake thee—Miranda! he will forsake thee!"—Oh! that I could have recalled my youth, and its disregarded beauty—Oh! that I could have laid down my head and died, in a renewal of the blessed self-deception preceding Dora's return!—

I will not—I cannot detail the minute progress and justifications of my suspicions; the gradual estrangement of Worsley's affection from myself and the visible growth of his new passion. To feel the relaxing pressure of his hand, to mark the chilling calmness of his altered eye, to hear the unwitting change of his endearing expressions, had been comparatively easy of endurance. But it was my destined trial to behold each treasured token of tenderness successively transferred to another; to hear his intonation soften as he addressed my sister; to know his alienated looks of love fixed in rapturous admiration upon her every movement;— and in time I was fated to note the fond and confiding self-abandonment with which Dorathea repaid his devotion. I could not even forewarn her of my wretchedness, or upbraid her with treachery; for how would it have served me to proclaim that man *my* lover, whom she had only

known as—her own! No; I resigned myself to my calamity;—nor presumed to wrestle with the influence of such perfection of youthful loveliness. I even imparted new graces to the mild lustre of its sweetness, by the contrast of my own sullen or agonised countenance. I resigned myself; — but not unrepiningly. New and dreadful emotions seemed awakening within me; and I shuddered to contemplate the darkness of the mysterious caverns revealed to me within the innermost depths of my heart; — I shuddered!—for I scarcely yet knew what demons might be sheltered there.

I cannot but believe that Sir Wilmot Worsley was conscious and apprehensive of the dreadful struggle of passion within my bosom. Yet it was an abject weakness on his part to flee precipitately as he did from Wrocksley. So mighty was his influence, that had he spoken and pleaded, and appealed to the native generosity of my heart, methinks I might have subdued my feelings into patience, under the sustaining excitement of conscious well-doing. But he fled, — leaving my sister—*my victim*—at my merciless disposal. I knew not that he was gone to pray my father's interference; but I *did* know that he had already pleaded his cause, and not in vain, in Dora's ears. —For in her gentle candour she told me all;—that she loved him—that he was hers—her own

—her affianced.—Oh! mighty Heaven! how fervent in that hour was my prayer for deliverance from evil;—even from the evil-prompting of my secret soul!

And then came letters and tokens, with which the frenzy of my jealousy urged me to augment my tortures. I read them—I gazed upon them,—the picture, and the braided hair, and the written records of his love!—I pressed them to my burning brain, my withered heart;—and I thought of my wasted youth, and of my lonely age,—till my soul grew dark and swollen with contending passions. And again and again I prayed that heavenly interposition would deliver me from evil!—But Heaven withheld its aid!—and I grew mad with the rampant wickedness of a sinful human nature; and I cursed my innocent sister, and reviled her, and smote her, and held her in stern durance, lest she should communicate my cruel dealing to—*to him!* And lo! one day when, with impatient fury, I had caused her hands to be bound and her steps restrained, that she might not escape me, a stern interposing voice sounded in my ears,—and my father, gray-headed and awful, stood beside us!

He demanded, with solemn utterance, wherefore I had so harshly dealt with his youngest-born; and the tears stole down his venerable face

as he took his dagger from its sheath, and severed the cords which bound my weeping, trembling, rescued sister.—And I saw that *his* heart, too, was in her cause,—that I had lost all,—that I was alone on earth;—and an evil instigation, a demon's suggestion, put words of horror into my mouth.—I told him that his Dorathea had turned to shame;—that his child had become a castaway;—that my sister was the minion of Worsley's wanton love!

The dagger was in his hand,—and in his soul the pride of six centuries of unsoiled honour. It was but a blow!—In a moment the sprinkling of her innocent blood was upon me—*the baptism of my eternal condemnation!*——

Spare me, spare me your consolations!—They are unavailing to a sorrow such as mine!

VERREX.

VERREX.

" Che fan quì tante pellegrine spade
O diluvio raccolto,
Di che deserti strani
Per innondar i nostri dolci campi?"

Petrarca.

WHO can wonder that the arts should have been nursed and fostered in the lap of Italy?—that poetry, painting, music, (etherealised essences of all that is noble in the external frame of nature,) should emanate from a land so fertile in the elements of beauty and sublimity?—a land where skies, seas, lakes, rivers, forests, alpine heights, and pastoral valleys, unite in the formation of landscapes, soft as the luxurious dreams of Claude, or startling as the severer fancies of Salvator;—a land where the realities of life assume a more romantic guise,—whose atmosphere is redolent of "sweet coming fancies,"—whose very language is a language of love!

The descent from that rugged rampart of Switzerland, the St. Bernard, to the valleys of Piedmont, is as the unfolding of a tale of romance; of which the Val d'Aosta may be said to "foretel the nature of a magic volume." The precipitous majesty of its mountain bulwarks, piled up to the gathering clouds like monuments of Titanic ambition; the shrubby underwood interspersing an infinite variety of verdure among stern gray crags, lichen-bearded with the hoariness of centuries; here a *châlet* of pine-logs niched among abutting rocks —there a solitary tower, a dark remnant of the fierceness of the feudal ages—or on some jutting summit, a monumental black cross—a sign and warning to the traveller that danger lurks in the lonely fastness, that the imprecations of the assassin and the shrieks of the murdered have resounded among those gloomy ravines,—all tend to depress the mind elevated by the first prospect of the sublimity of the scenery.

Overpowered by the voiceless eloquence of solitude, the wanderer of the Val d'Aosta rejoices when the spires of Châtillon rise before him on the shores of the Dorea; or when Verrex, with its convent walls and ruined battlements, stands forth in melancholy isolation amid the rude defile. Among the simple but uncouth peasantry of that secluded valley, the *kropfiger* or *gozzuto* exhibits

his goitrous excrescences; and every thing occurs to hasten the step of the traveller through the mountain gorge to the fair and fertile plains beyond,—to the land of the mulberry, the olive, and the vine—the waving corn-fields and verdant plantations of Lombardy.

During the opening year of the present century, however, the silence of the Val d'Aosta was broken by the bray of trumpets, the trampling of war-steeds, the roaring of the mighty tide of an usurping army. France sent forth her republican hosts to plant their iron lances among the olives of Italy; —the eagle, still a fledgeling among the insignia of modern nations, seemed to gather new vigour from congenial alpine breezes;—and the king of Sardinia who, as master of the frontier fortresses, has been said to hold the keys of the Alps at his girdle, soon learnt with dismay, that not even the potent alliance of Austria,—not even the majestic rampart raised by nature in defence of his kingdom,—was sufficient to secure his territory against the invasions of a captain who had pointed the way over glaciers and precipices and overwhelming snows, and been cheerfully obeyed.

The artillery of Marmont and Gassendi, having passed the St. Bernard dragged in hollow trunks of trees, was already traversing the valley; Lannes, with his cavalry, had taken possession of the town of Aosta; and intelligence soon reached the

head-quarters of General Melas that five thousand Austrians, stationed at Châtillon for the defence of the pass, had fled in disorder, with the loss of their guns and ammunition. Nay, the first consul himself was now halting at the hospice of St. Maurice, to take breath ere he pounced upon the predestined prey, extended in the valley at his feet!

It was on the night of the 19th May, 1800, that Bonaparte, inspirited by the tidings of these preliminary successes, and excited by his preparations for descending the mountain on the morrow, was on the point of retiring for a few hours' repose; when his sleeve was twitched by one of the brethren of St Maurice, who, in spite of the attempts of General Marescot to repel his approach, persisted in demanding from the first consul a few moments' audience for a young stranger, his countryman.

"A stranger," cried the impatient general wearied out by his exertions of the day. "He chooses his time ill. Let him wait till daybreak."

"The hour, I admit, is an untoward one," replied the ecclesiastic, meekly. "But the Marquis Alderoni has ridden hard from the Austrian lines; and, moreover, his mule dropped under him as he was ascending the mountain."

"The Austrian lines!" cried the first consul; "why not speak out at first?—Recluse as you are, our good brother and host,—surely, even the chronicles of Holy Writ might have informed you that a friend from the enemy's camp is doubly welcome?"

"The marquis waits your commands," said the monk, beckoning a person in the crowd to approach; and the first consul, having hastily dismissed a little knot of the *état major*, who were waiting their latest orders for the morrow's movements, was about to withdraw to a distant window, when murmurs of "Assassin!"—"Sardinian bravo!"—"Swabian ruffian!" reached his ears from the group of staff officers who were quitting the room. "Fear nothing!" said Bonaparte, laughing at their vehemence, "our stars have better care of us. There are too many good sabres unsheathed just now, to leave us to the mercy of a Piedmontese poniard." And seizing the light with which his domestic, Constant, had been about to precede him to his chamber, he suddenly flared it with an utter disregard to the courtesies of life in the face of the young stranger. The result of the examination was favourable. The French general prepared to accost the intruder, by whose high-bred calmness of look and attitude he stood rebuked, with a degree of courtesy far from habitual to his lips.

"Am I to understand that I address the Marquis Alderoni?" he enquired, conceding to the claims of a foreigner a title then in disuse.

The stranger bowed haughtily.

"And as a friend to the republic of France?"

Alderoni hesitated; involuntarily assuming an air of defiance.

"As an overt enemy to the country I have the honour to serve," reiterated Bonaparte, galled by the contemptuous bearing of his visitor, "or as a covert traiter to his own?"

The stranger started convulsively: but recovering himself as if by a powerful effort over his feelings, replied in a firm, distinct, and measured voice—"As an avowed and determined traitor to his own."

"And to what my lord marquis," replied the republican general, in a tone of bitter irony, "am I to pin my faith in asseveration of your word?—Are we to be upon honour in our negotiations?—or, having thrown off the mask which most men are so sturdy to maintain, will you with consistent frankness inform me, to the last *livre* or *scudo*, the amount chargeable to the French government for the purchase of a magnifico of Savoy?"

"Monsieur le consul," replied Alderoni, throwing back his cloak, as if to prove himself unarmed, and at the mercy of his interrogator, "I come hither neither to bandy taunts with the generalis-

simo of a conquering army, nor to affect a chivalrous tenderness for the honour of a name and fame of six centuries' nobility, unworthily represented in my person. Bound on a quest like mine, it were idle to play the hero. I am no longer the champion of my father's house, my native country, my hereditary prince; but a spy and a deserter, seeking service with the enemies of my sovereign. I have said it!—Nothing you can urge in scorn or raillery will add to the degradation of such a position. In policy, if not in generosity, desist therefore from your irony. A powerful motive brought me hither: do not create one yet more powerful to drive me from your presence."

"I cry you mercy, my lord, and wait your pleasure for further explanation," cried the *petit corporal*, covering his confusion with a prolonged pinch of snuff. "Premising only, that as my brave companions yonder are waiting my retirement to rest, as their supper signal, you will be pleased to render your communications as succinct as may be consistent with your dignity. Plain Italian,—plain dealing, Say out, sir!—what are you prepared to do for us?—What remuneration claim you for your services?"

"The troops of the republic have received a sudden check," said Alderoni. "The advanced division, under General Lannes was yesterday

repulsed with considerable loss in an attack on the fortress of Bard."

"'Tis false!" cried the first consul, stamping till the stone floor rang with his violence.

"I have outstripped the courier bearing the intelligence but by a single hour," said Alderoni, coldly. "A despatch will reach you before daybreak;—let us *then* resume our conference."

"Repulsed!—repulsed by the fortress of Bard," involuntarily ejaculated Bonaparte, the probabilities of such a dilemma having already suggested themselves to his foresight. "And should your report prove authentic, what assistance have you to offer?"

"The counsel of one who has been for months past enrolled in its garrison. This stronghold of the Val d'Aosta would defy the military skill of Vauban himself, unaided by a guide familiar at once with the resources of the fortress and with the—"

"Bah!" cried Bonaparte, interrupting him. "I undertake to promise that the plan of attack, devised ere we quitted Paris, will eventually leave nothing but the stones of the fort heaped up as a monument of Austrian vigilance and Sardinian valour."

"So thought the brave Lannes!—Yet already the French troops are struck with consternation; while their officers loudly regret the preci-

pitancy with which the passage of St. Bernard was achieved."

"Again I say 'tis false!" cried the first consul, with rising choler. But as he spoke, Junot, entering the hall, placed a despatch in his hands, and communicated in a few coarse but expressive words the evil tidings he had extracted from the courier.

"That cursed fortress! — Who would have thought of finding a lion by the way, amid this pitiful sheepfold of Piedmont?" cried Bonaparte, running his eye over the papers he was unfolding. 'Sir marquis, this news more than confirms your prognostications. No time is to be lost:—in a word, are you prepared to provide us with a plan of the fortress of Bard, and with secret information sufficient to place our brave General Lannes in possession of the citadel?"

"I am!"

"And the guerdon of your intelligence?"—

"A guarantee for the immediate evacuation of the Ursuline convent in the town of Verrex, now occupied as the head-quarters of the third division of the republican army; and a safe conduct for two persons, a male and female, on the route to Lausanne."

"The Ursuline convent of Verrex!" exclaimed Bonaparte, in a tone of sovereign contempt; "some daughter of the illustrious house of Alde-

roni is probably cloistered in its holy dove-cote? —Humph! The captains of France, long unused to the spectacle of the veil and wimple, may, I admit, exhibit somewhat too ardent a curiosity on the subject: beauty, even under the Ursuline hood, offers a perilous temptation to the best disciplined soldier."

Alderoni answered not a syllable; but the cold-beaded drops rose visibly on his sallow forehead.

"You offer, however, a heavy mulct," resumed the general, "to preserve the lips of these ladies of your line from sacrilegious contact. One might have fancied that the stainless honour of the family of Alderoni would receive more blemish from the recreancy of its signor and lord, than from a stray smile or so bestowed by some noble votaress on our gallant heroes of the republic."

"In one word," cried the marquis, unable to endure this bantering, "do you or do you not accede to my proposition?"

"Without reference to the council of war, I am not prepared—" the first consul was beginning.

"You *are* prepared!" fiercely interrupted Alderoni; "prepared by the despotic impulses of a will that bears no encroachment on its authority. To the point, Monsieur le Consul!—Here are plans of the fortress, which, ere morning, it shall be my task to complete." And, taking a roll of

paper from his bosom, he unfolded it for the examination of Bonaparte, whose practised eye was instantly caught by the masterly execution of the draught, as well as by the unexpected particulars revealed in its unfinished details.

"Ay, ay,—this looks workmanly and well!" exclaimed he to the young stranger, by whose fine person and spirited demeanour he was unconsciously interested. "By noon to-morrow, should no unforeseen accident delay me in my descent, I shall reach Aosta, and lay your plans and proposals before Generals Marmont and Victor."

"No," cried Alderoni, in the dogged tone of a desperate man; "I quit not this chamber without a definite reply. My heart, my soul, my life, are periled in my errand."

"I might, perhaps, remind the noble marquis," answered Bonaparte, with a sneer, "that he quits this chamber at my bidding, and sanctioned only by my safeguard; but I scorn to have recourse to intimidation. In a word, sir, your negotiations are ended. Attend me to-morrow at day-break and let these plans be completed in time for the courier who precedes us to Châtillon.—Holà, Bourrienne!—See this gentleman accommodated to-night with refreshment and writing materials, and to-morrow with a mule capable of keeping pace with those of my staff."

After another transient glance at the papers, the

first consul bestowed a peremptory token of dismissal on his new ally. The marquis seemed about to remonstrate; but suddenly checking himself, bowed with an air of haughty humility, and was about to quit the chamber; when, overcome by excess of fatigue and excitement, he staggered and fell senseless on the threshold.

"How is this?" cried Larrey, who was instantly summoned to minister to his assistance: "call you this a swoon?—I find a gash in the chest such as might pin the stanchest veteran in our lines to a truckle-bed! What the plague set this mad-headed fellow a-gadding with the dressing scarcely firm on such a wound?"

"Let him be carefully looked to," said Bonaparte, retiring from the inquisitive group, after possessing himself of the papers; "his life is worth more to us just now than those of any ten picked officers of our line."

Amadeo, Marquis of Alderoni—the object of the first consul's solicitude—was born a cadet of one of the most ancient houses of Piedmont. His boyhood had reaped some distinction from an appointment as page of honour to attend to the court of France Madame Maria Teresa of Savoy, bride to the Comte d'Artois; but the corrupt court of Versailles afforded a bad school of morality to a light-headed and hot-hearted youth; and, ten years afterwards, the young marquis, at the

age of one-and-twenty, had already acquired renown as the most graceful libertine at the court of Turin. Proud of so honourable a distinction, it was his boast that he had already quaffed the cup of pleasure to the dregs,—that his heart was inaccessible to new pleasures, his mind to new impressions; nor, till the young Countess of Moncalda, his distant kinswoman, appeared at court, did he believe it possible that aught could renovate his exhausted feelings, or allure him anew to the gorgeous dulness of the Hotel de Carignan and the monotonous lounge of the Corso.

A single interview with the lovely Teresa decided his destinies. *She* was all curiosity to behold the scion of her father's house, whom she had so often heard described by her maiden aunts as the most dangerous of his sex; and *he* all wonder that the stars should have decreed the possession of a creature so bright and beautiful to the ugliest, most bigoted, and most forbidding among the chamberlains of His Majesty of the Anchovies. Profiting by the established custom of the court of Savoy, Alderoni instituted himself *cavaliere* in ordinary to his interesting relative; although no man could be less fitted by nature or education for the discharge of an office (a last relic of the fanfaronnades of chivalry) which necessitates the closest contact with the coldest courtesy, the language without the passion of love. The thing

was impossible! Alderoni, for the first time, loved in right earnest, wooed in right earnest, and succeeded in his wooing with an earnestness anything but right. The gentle Teresa lent her unsuspecting lip for a single moment to the intoxicating cup of illicit passion, only to drink for the remainder of her days, those draughts of bitterness,—those atoning tears,—wrung by repentance from the human heart;—like honey drops gathered by bees from the poisonous flowers of the savannah.

The Conte di Moncalda, originally of Spanish extraction, but inheriting vast estates in Sardinia as well as the highest favour of Victor Emanuel, partook unfortunately of the vigilant jealousy and tenacious sense of honour of his Castilian ancestry. Ever on the watch, he found it an easy task to detect the two young and imprudent lovers who were bringing disgrace upon his name; and a glorious retribution to hold them up to infamy. In catholic countries, the impossibility of divorce may be supposed to redouble the anguish of a degradation of this description. But with some minds revenge is sweeter than redress. If the adulterous wife cannot be put away and branded with legal shame, she may be incarcerated for life in a religious prison, with the canker of her unhallowed passion eating slowly into her heart.

Moncalda having received such satisfaction at

the point of his sword as his triumphant rival had to offer, experienced far greater in an order from his liege lord and master, condemning the countess to imprisonment for life in the Ursuline convent of Verrex, adjoining his family estates; and the Marquis Alderoni recovered from a severe wound to find himself exiled from court, and his Teresa,—the young, the beautiful, the beloved Teresa,—buried for life, in the loathsome grave of a Piedmontese convent!

Could he but have secured a parting interview, —could he but have wept for one short hour at her feet, imploring pardon for all he had made her suffer, beseeching her pity for all he was about to suffer in his turn,—could he but have imbibed one single draught of love, of eternal remembrance, of intense and passionate communion, from those soft eyes that had been to his heart as the dawning of a new day,—he fancied he might have been patient under his sentence. But to know that a destiny worse than death had interposed between them; that he should never look again upon the fair face he had stained with tears; never again hear the music of that voice which had murmured such enchanting promises of happiness; never again sun himself in those smiles which were now withering behind the grate of a convent!—*She* to be imprisoned in a gloomy cell, and arrayed in a vest of serge!—she, whose at-

mosphere was the palace,—whose appropriate attire the jewelled robe of state,—whose presence so fitted to adorn and be adorned by the pomp and privileges of magnificence!

Immediately on his departure from Turin, Alderoni hastened in disguise to the wretched town of Verrex, to gaze upon the stern walls dividing him for ever from the object of his tenderness. There, overshadowed by the mountain heights, overlooking the shallow stream of the Dorea and the plantations skirting the glacis of its dismantled fortifications, there stood the fatal pile:—*there*—hidden behind that dreary wall, on which the fruitless sunshine was gleaming as in mockery, wept Teresa,—the idol of the court of Savoy, the joy of the united houses of Alderoni and Moncalda, the degraded paramour of a banished libertine!—From the shade of those lime-tree groves many a glance of agony did he turn towards the fatal turrets, shuddering when the harsh sound of the convent bell announced the expiration of the dreary hours. Alas! what availed the progress of time in that cold, that desolate solitude?—What availed the approach to eternity for *him*,—for *her*?—

But this could not last. The appearance of a stranger in the secluded town of Verrex soon attracted notice among the peasants, all vassals and dependants of his enemy; and the herdsmen,

when at noon they brought their cattle to refresh themselves in the waters of the Dorea, gazed suspiciously upon one who wore their own rude garb, but neither spoke the dialect of Piedmont nor answered to their uncouth salutations.

Alderoni now forsook his native land. The French revolution had already broken out; and an imputation of liberalism operated almost as strongly as the personal interest of the indignant Moncalda to procure his sentence of banishment. He had no longer a home, no longer a country; and the roving life to which he thenceforth accustomed himself, did but harden his heart against all natural ties,—all human associations. Every gentler feeling of his nature was concentrated in that one dark spot of the Val d'Aosta;—all else was desperation, and horror, and madness.

At length a gleam of mingled hope and apprehension broke in upon his destiny. A republican army invaded Italy; triumphed at Montenotte, at Arcole, at Lodi; and the humiliation of Piedmont seemed to inspire a sensation of triumph into the gloomy mind of the son she had driven forth to shame. What might be the result of the establishment of a Cisalpine republic? Would not the iron gates of its cloisters be wrenched asunder—all political crimes absolved—all prisons of state opened?—Not yet! The King of Sardinia sued for an ignominious peace; and the

treaty of Campo Formio restored tranquillity to Italy.

Two years, however, had scarcely elapsed, when General Bonaparte, now promoted to the consulate, again displayed his banner on the frontier. Europe heard with amazement that the troops so recently triumphant on the scorching sands of El Arisch, were about to confront the eternal snows of the Alps; and the exiled Alderoni derived a new source of irritation from the certainty that even the remote solitude of the valley of the Dorea was about to become the causeway of invasion.

Agonized by conjectures of all the horrors following in the rear of a conquering army, he did not for a moment hesitate to fly to the defence of a spot possessing so sacred a claim upon his services. Long before the arrival of the first consul at Lausanne,—the winter quarters of the army of reserve,—Alderoni was serving under a feigned name as a cadet of artillery in the fortress of Bard.

No human predilection clings closer to the heart than the love of country. Whatever chasm the convulsions of passion may produce to disunite us from the land of our ancestors—the land in which we drew breath—an anchor is fast in the earth which enchains our bosoms to its influences. Even Alderoni, who for years had been cursing the names of Piedmont and of its sovereign, no

sooner beheld his native soil menaced with foreign invasion, than he experienced a contraction of those unseen ties by which it was united to his heart. But it was national pride rather than patriotism which inflamed his feelings. He was infatuated with the persuasion that no foreign force could overcome the strength with which nature had engirded the Piedmontese frontier,—that it was with the feeble and enervate power of Genoa the arm of the French republic had so successfully wrestled;—but that to Aosta and its valley, the glaciers and intricacies of the surrounding mountain passes afforded invincible security.

He looked down upon the waters of the Dorea, as they rippled at the base of the conical rock on which the fortress of Bard stands, giantlike and menacing,—those waters which bathed the walls of Teresa's prison,—and longed to endow them with the power of whispering to the recluse that all was safe; that the hosts of the French republic were probably already perishing among the snows of St. Bernard, victims to the fool-hardiness of their braggart general.

What, therefore, was his amazement,—what his consternation,—when tidings of the investiture of Aosta by Lannes and his division were spread by the courier bound to the head-quarters of Melas! What his horror on learning that General Victor had taken possession of Châtillon,—

reached the town of Verrex,—nay, actually established his quarters in the Ursuline convent! Fugitives were hourly pouring in from the valley, with exaggerated accounts of the acts of spoliation and violence practised by the French troops. There was no longer any hope!—Heaven and earth seemed to favour the conqueror;—nature had no obstacle sufficient to impede his progress.

One only consideration, however, engrossed the mind of Alderoni.—TERESA!—Teresa exposed to the insolence, the worse than insolence, of the ruffians whose existence was traced to the leaven of blood and dust created by the outrages of the French revolution. There was madness associated with such a picture!—But a soft and supernatural vision suddenly irradiated the scene. Amid the ruin of his country and the destruction of its social institutions, there was hope for *him*:—Teresa might be restored to the light of heaven,—to his arms—to love—to happiness. No! there could not be treachery in the act which purchased such a triumph, and preserved the victim of his passion from the embraces of a lawless conqueror—from the depths of a dungeon! He paused not for a moment's consideration. Life and death were in every instant that flitted past; another hour and it would be impossible to escape from the fortress; nay, even after having fled its precincts, even after having attained the enemy's lines, it was only by

a desperate and fatal conflict with a French trooper that he was enabled to assume the uniform which carried him unmolested to Aosta.—Great Heaven! the first consul had not yet passed the mountain!—and circumstances had transpired during his momentary pause at Verrex, impelling the quick blood like fire through the veins of the fugitive!—Such was the impulse which gave him strength to reach the Hospice of St. Maurice;—such the origin of the exhaustion which left him senseless at the feet of Bonaparte.

No sooner did the first consul reach Aosta, than the evil tidings of the preceding night were confirmed to him by the testimony of Generals Loison and Vatrin. A fresh movement had taken place; attended with a severe loss on the part of the French, and an universal conviction that the passage of the valley of Aosta was fatally impeded by the strength and vigilance of the fortress of Bard. On examination of the plans of Alderoni, their unfinished state and inexplicit nature rendered them of small account; and Bonaparte, instead of resting for the night as he had purposed at Aosta, advanced at once to Verrex, for a conference with Victor and Monnier.

Among the stormy emotions and varying interests of the hour, the wounded stranger of St. Maurice and his connexion with the Ursuline convent was forgotten; nor was there anything in

the present aspect of the head-quarters of Victor to recall to mind the original destination of the building. The little community having retreated to one of its turrets, under guard and guarantee of safety from the general their unwelcome inmate, the remainder of the convent was now converted into a depôt of military stores; the chapel into a cavalry stable; and the peaceful quadrangle was filled with artillery carriages, and artificers working at their reparation.

At an early hour of the following morning the charger of the first consul stood pawing the ground under the gateway, surrounded by a crowd of anxious petitioners, kept back by the impatient sentinels on duty, or now and then dispersed by the exits and entrances of officers of superior rank. But a scene of still deeper interest was passing in the chamber above:—pale, haggard, wild, the young Piedmontese noble was engaged in earnest conference with Bonaparte, to whose brow further tidings of the resistance of Bard imparted a glare of gloomy ferocity. Alderoni had with difficulty gathered strength to pursue his purpose. But, thanks to artificial excitement, he was once more by the side of the first consul; who now pointed out to him half reproachfully, half ironically, the defects of the plans he held in his hands.

"It is too late for any but personal instruc-

tions," faltered the marquis. "But could I reach the fortress, I might still point out the path to victory. With prudence and discrimination, the town might be passed during the night;—the adjacent rock of Albaredo affords a *point d'appui* hitherto unattempted."

"Forward then!" cried Bonaparte, who had little sympathy with physical weakness.

"Your pardon!" exclaimed Alderoni. "My conditions must first be accomplished. Let this convent be forthwith evacuated, and then—"

"Bah!" exclaimed the general; "think you that the commissariat of the republican army is to be dislodged to gratify the peevish whim of some dainty lady countess of the house of Alderoni?—Accompany me, however, to Bard; prove to me the efficiency of your aid, and, on the faith of a soldier, by day-dawn to-morrow your wishes shall be accomplished."

Alderoni shuddered. "One word more!" said he; "I may not survive to witness the event. There is an individual beneath this roof with whom I would fain demand a brief interview ere we depart."

"*Mille diables!*" cried the general, half disgusted, half amused, by the infatuation of the young soldier. "These nuns of St. Ursula run strangely in your head!—Speak, sir," he continued,

addressing the marquis, but beckoning an aide-de-camp who waited at the door; "with whom do you desire a conference?"

"The Countess Moncalda."

"Ahi, ahi!—no nun, then, but a state prisoner? your sister? — mistress? — no matter! Labédoyère! inform the lady abbess,—the old woman in the flannel gown yonder in the turret,—that the first consul of France demands an interview with the Countess Moncalda. *Monsieur le marquis,* you have leave to devote ten minutes to your friend."

But Alderoni gave no heed to his injunctions. Heart and soul were stirring within his bosom in the utmost fervour of excitement. The dreams of hopeless years were on the point of realization. Yes! he was about to see her once more—still living, perhaps still loving,—to luxuriate in the tones of her breathing voice,—and wake to new life under the mournful tenderness of her gaze. She who had sacrificed all to him—for whom he had sacrificed every thing in return, would soon be beside him;—her warm hand clasped in his;—her sighs mingled lip to lip with his own. He noted not the presence of the first consul. The whole world might have been there and he would have seen, heard, felt nothing but Teresa;—nothing,—nothing but Teresa! A step was audible

in the corridor.—He started. The door turned slowly on its hinges, and a veiled female figure slowly traversed the room.

"Citizen general," said a sweet but hollow voice, "I am here in obedience to your commands. *I* am the Countess di Moncalda."

"Teresa, Teresa!" exclaimed Alderoni, rushing forward, "it is I—your kinsman—your lover—who have ventured every thing to secure this interview. Speak to me, dearest!—Behold me at your feet again;—say that all is atoned, all forgotten, all forgiven!—Teresa, speak to me!"

"Hush!" said the same mild mournful voice; "these are not words or accents for the abode of holiness. When we parted, Amadeo, you left me nothing but my tears!—But God is merciful!—they have not been wept in vain. See!" she exclaimed, throwing back the veil among whose sable folds her pale attenuated face glimmered as with the ghastly whiteness of marble, "see—see what grief has done, and what repentance promises!"

"Teresa!" cried the marquis, pressing the hem of her garment to his lips, without daring to raise his eyes a second time to her wasted countenance, "why should one reproachful word mar the blessedness of this hour?—Our sufferings are over!—To-morrow I return to bear you from this hateful place. A safe-conduct from the first consul

will enable us to reach France. Teresa, our destiny is accomplished!"

"May Heaven forgive our past transgressions!" faltered the countess, shuddering as she strove to extricate herself from his embraces; "but dream not that I will tempt its wrath by living the life and dying the death of an adulteress! Enough! Persist no further in your bootless supplications; but rather tell me what chance has united the interests of my cousin Amadeo with those of the enemies of Piedmont?"

"You—*you* are the cause of all!—For you I have forsworn allegiance to king,—country,—honour,—reputation.—With you I was willing to become an outcast. Behold, Teresa!—behold this scroll, the price of this cruel interview;—'tis the plan of the fortress of Bard, which, for the vain delight of looking once more upon your face, I have sworn to deliver into the hands of the enemies of my country!"

"Perish so vile an evidence of our family's dishonour!" cried the countess, snatching it from his hands and tearing it into pieces. "Rather let us die, Amadeo; die miserably,—die honourably,—than tarnish your fair fame by the baseness of treason. Even my husband perils his life in defence of the banners of Savoy."

"Rash woman!—what is it you do?" cried Bonaparte, seizing her arm. "For you a devoted

heart has abjured every duty, every earthly compensation; yet your selfish coldness would reject the sacrifice!—Ha! how is this?" cried he, as a loud discharge of artillery suddenly shook the convent to its base, and volleys of answering musketry resounded among the hills.

"The Austrians! the Austrians!" cried innumerable voices. A detachment of three thousand men under General Ebersburg, unaware of the arrival of the first consul with his re-inforcement, had in truth attempted to surprise the town, and were already in possession of the bridge; nor was it till after a severe conflict, and with tremendous slaughter, that they were driven a second time into the mountain recesses towards Ivrea.

Yet notwithstanding the delay and fatigue arising from this unexpected movement, that very evening the first consul, supported by his favourite brigade, was on his march with a view to resume on the following day the attack on the fortress of Bard. The stratagem by which the French artillery was eventually enabled to pass the town unmolested by the batteries, and the subsequent destruction of the fortress, are matters of history; but it is matter neither of history nor interest to the world in general, that the body of a nameless individual interred in the darkness and stillness of midnight in a remote corner of the Ursuline cemetery, by order of Bonaparte, was that of a Pied-

montese soldier who died, sword in hand, defending the gateway of the convent.

A black cross, half hidden among the weeds, still points out his grave to the curiosity of the traveller. But religious scruples, even in that season of disorder and devastation, forbade them to dig the grave of Teresa di Moncalda beside that of her lover. She rests in the cloister of the conventual church of Verrex, under a slab simply inscribed with her initials, and the ordinary legend of *Resquiescat in pace !—*

WINE.

WINE.

"Oh! thou invisible spirit of wine!—if thou hast no name to be known by, let us call thee—devil!"

Shakspeare.

Some eighteen months, or two years ago, I was doing my duty to my country and myself on board His Majesty's frigate, the Astræa, by undergoing seventeen games of chess per diem with our first lieutenant, and filling up every pause with murmurs at the continuance of these piping times of peace. We had been cruising some months in the Mediterranean, chiefly for the amusement of two dandy cousins of an honourable Captain, whom we picked up at Malta basking like two yellow over-ripe gourds in the sunshine. We had touched at most of the ports of the Ionians, where Cyprus may be had for paying for; and where *faldettas* are held by hands as fair as their coquettish folds are black and lustrous.

We had done due service to the state, by catching agues snipe-shooting in the Albanian marshes; listening to five-year-old operas, screeched by fifty-year-old prima donnas; by learning to swear by St. Spiridion, and *at* his Klephtic votaries. We had spouted in the school of Homer, and shouted at Lepanto;—poured libations on the grave of Anacreon;—and voted the Leucadian leap a rifle, compared with a Leicestershire fence!

At length, one beautiful evening, one of those twilights of chrysolite and gold such as poets dream of and the Levant alone can realize, (having been for three preceding days, not "spell-bound," but "calm bound, among the clustering Cyclades,") it was the pleasure of our honourable Captain, and his cousins, to drop anchor in the Bay of ———, (I have reasons of my own for not being more explicit;) where, after swearing the usual number of oaths at the quarantine officers, and the crews of the Venetian and Turkish traders who make it part of their religion to give offence to the blue-jackets, when the offence can be given with impunity, I had the satisfaction to find myself, at about seven o'clock, P. M., seated at the mess of His Majesty's gallant —th, doing as much justice to the roast beef of Old England as if we had not been within a day's sail of the Island of the Minotaur.

It was, indeed, refreshing to listen to the king's English, in its own accents; to eat of the king's sirloin, in its own gravy; and to join in the jargon of horse-flesh, in its own slang;—to hear the names of Newmarket, White's, Tattersall's, Ellen Tree, and Charles Kemble, familiar in their mouths as household words; to throw off, in short, for an hour or two, the tedium of professional existence. A bumper of port appeared as palatable in a climate where the thermometer stood at 88° in the shade, as amid the clammy fogs of the cold North; and, at length, after a liberal indulgence in Hudson's best, (only the more relished because the richest Turkey tobacco and a pipe of cherry wood were in the hands of every soldier in the garrison,) proposals were made for a bowl of "Gin-Punch!" —Lord Thomas Howard, a lieutenant in the—th, was announced to be a masterhand in the scientific brew; and the very name of gin-punch affords, in the fatherland of Achilles, a sort of anticlimax, such as there is no resisting. The materials were brought The regimental bowl, in which Picton himself is recorded to have plunged the ladle; lemons from the islands, redolent of romance and poetry; and a bottle of Hodges' best, redolent of Holborn Hill, appeared in as orderly array as though we had been supping at Limmer's.

"Are you a punch-drinker?" inquired my neighbour Captain Wargrave, with whom, as a school-fellow of my elder brother's, I had quickly made acquaintance.

"If I may venture to own it—no!" said I; "I have swallowed too much punch from compulsion in the course of my life."

"I judged as much from your looks," replied Wargrave, who had promised to see me on board the frigate. "If you want to get away from these noisy fellows, we can easily slip off while Lord Thomas and his operations engage their attention."

And in compliance with the hint, I soon found myself sauntering with him, arm in arm, on the bastions of ——. We had an hour before us, for the Captain's gig was not ordered till eleven; and, in order to keep an eye at once on the frigate and the shore, we sat down on an abutment of the parapet, to gossip away the time; interrupted only by the measured tramp of the sentinels, and enjoying the freshness of the night air, perfumed by the fragrance of jessamine and orange blossoms proceeding from the trelliced gardens of the Government House. As I am not ambitious of writing bad Byron, my readers must allow me to spare them the description of a night in Greece:—a lieutenant

of H.M.S. the Astræa, and a captain of H.M.'s gallant —th, may be supposed to entertain Hotspur's prejudices against ballad-mongers!—

"There seem to be hard-going fellows in your mess?" said I, to Wargrave, as he sat beside me with his arms folded over his breast. "Thornton, I understand, carries off his two bottles a-day, like a Trojan; and the fat major who sat opposite to me, made such play with the champagne, as caused me to blush for my squeamishness. For my own part, I should be well content never to exceed a couple of glasses of good claret. Wine affects me in a different way from most men. The more I drink, the more my spirits are depressed. While others get roaring drunk, I sit moping and despairing; and the next day my head aches like an artilleryman's."

"You are fortunate," said Wargrave drily.

"Fortunate?"—cried I. "I wish I could appreciate my own luck!—I am voted the sulkiest dog unhanged, whenever it is my cue to be jolly; and after proving a wet blanket to a merry party over-night, am ready to shoot myself with the head-ache and the blue devils the next morning. If there be a fellow I really envy, it is such a one as Thornton; who is ready to chime in with the chorus of the 36th stanza of Nancy Dawson between his two last bottles; and keeps

his head and legs, an hour after all the rest of the party have lost theirs under the table."

"Yes! I fancy Thornton is pretty well seasoned;—saturated like an old claret hogshead!"

"Enviable dog!—From time immemorial, odes have been indited to petition the gods for an insensible heart. When *I* turn lyrist, it will be to pray for an insensible stomach! Is it not a monstrous hard thing, when one hears the trolling of a joyous *chanson à boire*, or *trinklied*, under the lime-trees of France or Germany, to feel no sympathy in the strain save that of nausea?—There is something fresh and picturesque in the mere sound of 'the vine—the grape—the cup—the bowl!' It appears to me that Bacchus is the universal divinity, and that I alone am exempted from the worship.—Think of Lord Thomas's gin-punch, and pity me!"

Wargrave replied by a vague unmeaning laugh, which led me to conclude that my eloquence was lost upon him. Yet I continued.

"After all, in spite of the prevalence of this Bacchanalian idolatry, I think we hardly give honour due to the influence of wine. It is the mania of mankind to ascribe the actions of their fellow-creatures to all motives but the true;—but if they saw clearly, and spoke honestly, they would admit that more heroes have been made by the bottle than the sword."

"Have you any personal meaning in this tirade?"—suddenly interrupted my companion, in a voice whose concentration was deadly.

"*Personal* meaning!" I reiterated—"Of what nature?" And for a moment I could not but fancy that poor Wargrave had taken a deeper share in the Chateau Margaux of the fat Major, than I had been aware of. A man rather touched by wine, is sure to take fire on the most distant imputation of drunkenness.

"I can scarcely imagine, Sir," he continued, in a voice, however, that savoured of anything rather than inebriety, "that any man acquainted with the misfortunes of my life should address *me* on such a subject!"

"Be satisfied, then, that your indignation is groundless, and most unreasonable," said I,—still doubtful how far I ought to resent the ungraciousness of his demeanour; "for, on the word of a gentleman, till this day I never heard your name. Your avowal of intimacy with my brother, and something in the frankness of your manner that reminded me of his, added to the hilarity of an unexpected re-union with so many of my countrymen, has perhaps induced too sudden a familiarity in my demeanour; but, in wishing you good night, Captain Wargrave, and a fairer interpretation of the next sailor who opens his heart to you at sight, allow me to assure you, that

not a shadow of offence was intended in the rhapsody you are pleased to resent."

"Forgive me!"—exclaimed Wargrave, extending his hands, nay almost his arms, towards me. "It would have afforded only a crowning incident to my miserable history, had my jealous soreness on one fatal subject produced a serious misunderstanding with the brother of one of my dearest and earliest friends."

While I frankly accepted his apologies and offered hand, I could detect by the light of the moon, an expression of such profound dejection in the altered face of Wargrave—so deadly a paleness—a *haggardness*—that involuntarily I reseated myself on the wall beside him, as if to mark the resumption of a friendly feeling. He did not speak when he took his place; but, after a few minutes' silence, I had the mortification to hear him sobbing like a child.

"My dear fellow, you attach too much importance to an unguarded word, handsomely and satisfactorily explained," said I, trying to reconcile him with himself. "Dismiss it from your thoughts."

"Do not fancy," replied Wargrave, in a broken voice, "that these humiliating tears originate in anything that has passed between us this night.—No! The associations recalled to my mind by the rash humour you are generous

enough to see in its true light, are of far more ancient date, and far more ineffaceable nature. I owe you something, in return for your forbearance. You have still an hour to be on shore," he continued, looking at his watch. "Devote those minutes to *me*, and I will impart a lesson worth ten years' experience;—a lesson of which my own life must be the text—myself the hero!"

There was no disputing with him,—no begging him to be calm. Upon his whole frame was imprinted the character of an affliction not to be trifled with. I had only to listen, and impart in the patience of my attention such solace as the truly miserable can best appreciate.

"You were right," said Wargrave, with a bitter smile, "in saying that we do not allow ourselves to assign to wine the full measure of authority it holds among the motives of our conduct. But you were wrong in limiting that authority to the instigation of great and heroic actions. Wine is said in Scripture to 'make glad the heart of man.' Wine is said by the poets to be the balm of grief,—the dew of beauty —the filter of love:—what that is gracious and graceful is it not said to be? Clustering grapes entwine the brow of its divinity; and their juice is held to be a libation worthy of the gods.—Fools! fools! fools!—they need to have poured

forth their blood and tears like me, to know that it is a fountain of eternal damnation!

"Do not fancy that I allude to DRUNKENNESS;—do not class me in your imagination, with the sensual brute who degrades himself to the filthiness of intoxication. Against a vice so flagrant, how easy to arm one's virtue!—No! the true danger lies many degrees within that fearful limit; and the Spartans, who warned their sons against wine by the exhibition of their drunken Helots, fulfilled their duty blindly. Drunkenness implies, in fact, an extinction of the very faculties of evil. The enfeebled arm can deal no mortal blow;—the staggering step retards the perpetration of sin;—the voice can neither modulate its tones to seduction, nor hurl the defiance of deadly hatred. The drunkard is an idiot: a thing which children mock at, and women chastise. It is the man whose temperament is excited, not overpowered, by wine, to whom the snare is fatal!"—

"Only when unconscious of his infirmity," said I bluntly.

"Shakspeare makes Cassio conscious, yet his fault is achieved."

"Cassio is the victim of a designing tempter;—but an ordinary man, aware of his frailty, must surely find it easy to avoid the mischief?"

" *Easy*, as we look upon the thing from hence, —with the summer sky over our heads, the unshackled ocean at our feet, and the mockery of the scorner unheard; but in the animation of a convivial meeting, with cooler heads to mislead us by example, under the influence of conversation, music, mirth, *who* can at all times remember by how short a process it turns to poison in his veins?—

" Do not suppose me the Apostle of a Temperance Society, when I assert, on my life, my soul, my honour, that, after three glasses of wine, I am no longer master of my actions. Without being at the moment conscious of the change, I begin to see, and feel, and hear, and reason, differently:—the minor transitions between good and evil are forgotten; the lava boils in my bosom.—Three more, and I become a madman."

" But this constitutes a positive physical infirmity," said I. " You must of course regard yourself as an exception?—"

" No! I am convinced the case is common. Among my own acquaintance, I know fifty men who are pleasant companions in the morning, but intolerable after dinner; men who neither like wine nor indulge in it; but who, while simply fulfilling the forms and ceremonies of society, frequently become odious to others, and a burden to themselves."

"I really believe you are right."

"I *know* that I am right;—listen! When I became your brother's friend at Westminster, I was on the foundation,—an only son, intended for the Church: and the importance which my father and mother attached to my election for college, added such a stimulus to my exertions, that, at the early age of fourteen, their wish was accomplished. I was the first boy of my year;—a studentship at Christchurch crowned my highest ambition; and all that remained for me at Westminster was to preside over the farewell supper indispensable on occasion of similar triumphs. I was unaccustomed to wine, for my parents had probably taken silent note of the infirmity of my nature; and a very small proportion of the fiery tavern port which forms the nectar of vulgar festivities, sufficed to elevate my spirits to madness. Heated by noise and intemperance, we all sallied forth together, prepared to riot, bully, insult.—A fight ensued;—a life was lost.

"Expulsion suspended my election.—I never reached Oxford; my professional prospects were blighted; and, within a few months, my father died of the disappointment!—And now what was to be done with me?—My guardians decided that in the army the influence of my past fault would prove least injurious; and eager to

escape the tacit reproach of my poor mother's pale face and gloomy weeds, I gladly acceded to their advice. At fifteen, I was gazetted in the —th Regiment of Light Dragoons."

"At least you had no cause to regret the change of your profession?"—said I with a sailor's prejudice against parsonic cloth.

"I *did* regret it. A family-living was waiting for me; and I had accustomed myself to the thoughts of early independence and a settled home. Inquire of my friend Richard, on your return to England, and he will tell you that there could not be a calmer, graver, more studious, more sober fellow than myself.

"The nature of my misdemeanour, meanwhile, was not such as to alienate from me the regard of my young companions; and I will answer for it that on entering the army, no fellow could boast of a more extensive circle of friends. At Westminster, they used to call me 'Wargrave the peacemaker.' I never had a quarrel; I never had an enemy. Yet twelve months after joining the —th, I had acquired the opprobrium of being a quarrelsome fellow; had fought one of my brother officers, and was on the most uncomfortable terms with four others."

"And this sudden change———"

"Was *then* attributed to the sourness arising from my disappointments in life. I have since

ascribed it to a truer origin—the irritation of the doses of brandy, tinged with sloe juice, which formed the luxury of a mess-cellar. Smarting under the consciousness of unpopularity, I fancied I hated my profession, when in fact I only hated myself. I managed to get on half-pay, and returned to my mother's tranquil roof; tranquil to monotony—tranquil to dulness,—where, instead of regretting the brilliant life I had forsaken, my peace of mind and early contentment came back to me at once. There was no one to bear me company over the bottle; I was my mother's constant companion;—I seldom tasted wine;—I became healthy, happy, beloved."

"Beloved in a *lover's* sense?"

"Beloved as a neighbour and fellow-citizen;—but higher distinctions of affection followed. A young and very beautiful girl, of rank and fortune superior to my own, deigned to encourage the humble veneration with which I regarded her, till I became emboldened to solicit her heart and hand. My mother assured her I was the best of sons;—I readily promised to be the best of husbands. She believed us both; accepted me—married me; and on welcoming home my lovely gentle Mary, all remembrance of past sorrow seemed to be obliterated.

"Our position in the world, if not brilliant, was honourable. My mother's table renewed

those hospitalities over which my father had loved to preside. Mary's three brothers were our constant guests; and Wargrave—the calm, sober, indolent Wargrave—once more became fractious and ill at ease. My poor mother, who could conceive no fault in *my* disposition—concluding that, as in other instances, the husband had discovered in the daily companionship of married life, faults which had been invisible to the lover—ascribed to poor Mary all the discredit of the change. She took a dislike to her daughter-in-law, nay, even to Mrs. Wargrave's family, friends, and acquaintances. She saw that after they had been dining with me, I grew morose and irritable; and attributed the fault to my guests, instead of the cursed wine their company compelled me to swallow."

"Your wife was probably more discerning?"—

"No!—On such subjects women are not enlightened by experience. Even the vice of drunkenness is a mystery to them, unless when chance exhibits to their observation some miserable brute lying senseless in the public streets. Mary probably ascribed my fractiousness to infirmity of temper. She found me less good-humoured than she had expected, and more easily moved by trifles. The morning is the portion of the day in which married people live least in each other's

society; and my evenings seldom passed without a political squabble with some visiter, or a storm with the servants. The tea was cold;—the newspaper did not arrive in time;—or all the world was not exactly of my own opinion respecting the conduct of Ministers.

"Fortunately, poor Mary's time was engrossed by preparations for the arrival of her first child,—a pledge of domestic happiness calculated to reconcile a woman even to greater vexations than those arising from her husband's irritability. Mary palliated all my bursts of temper, by declaring her opinion that '*any* man might possess the insipid quality of good-humour; but that Wargrave, if somewhat hasty, had the best heart and principles in the world;'—and as soon as our little boy made his appearance, she excited the contempt of all her female acquaintances, by trusting 'that Harry would, in all respects, resemble his father.'—Heaven bless her for her blindness!"—

Wargrave paused for a moment; during which I took care to direct my eyes towards the frigate.

"Among those female friends, was a certain Sophy Cavendish, a cousin of Mary's,—young, handsome, rich,—richer and almost as handsome as herself; but gifted with that intemperate vi-

vacity which health and prosperity inspire. Sophy was a fearless creature,—the only person who did not shrink from my fits of ill-temper. When I scolded, she bantered; when I appeared sullen, she piqued me into cheerfulness. We usually met in morning visits, when I was in a mood to take her railleries in good part.

" To this playful girl it unluckily occurred to suggest to her cousin, ' Why don't you manage Wargrave as I do? why don't you laugh him out of his perversity?' And Mary, to whose disposition and manners all these *agaceries* were foreign, soon began to assume a most provoking sportiveness in our domestic disputes; would seize me by the hair,—the sleeve,—point her finger at me when I was sullen, and laugh heartily whenever I indulged in a reproof. I vow to Heaven, there were moments when this innocent folly made me hate her!

" ' It does not become *you* to ape the monkey tricks of your cousin,' cried I, one night when she had amused herself by fillipping water at me across the desert-table, while I was engaged in an intemperate professional dispute with an old brother officer.—' In trying to make me look like a fool, you only make a fool of yourself!'

" ' Don't be intimidated by a few big words,' cried Miss Cavendish, when this ebullition was reported to her. ' Men and nettles must be

bullied into tameness; they have a sting only for those who are afraid of them——Persevere !'

" She *did* persevere; and, on an occasion equally ill-timed, again the angry husband retorted severely upon the wife he loved.

" ' You must not banter him *in company,*' said Sophia. ' He is one of those men who hate being shown up before others. But when you are alone, take your revenge. Treat his anger as a jest. Prove to him you are not afraid of him; and since he chooses to behave like a child, argue with him as children are argued with.'

" It was on my return from a club dinner, that Mary attempted to put these mischievous precepts into practice. I was late—too late ! for against my will, I had been detained by the jovial party. But instead of encouraging the apologies I was inclined to offer for having kept her watching, Mary, who had been beguiling the time of my absence in her dressing room with an entertaining book by which her spirits were exhilarated, began to laugh at my excuses: to banter,—to mock me. I begged her to desist.—She persisted.—I grew angry.—She replied to my invectives by a thousand absurd accusations, invented to justify her mirth.—I bad her be silent.—She only laughed more loudly. I stamped, swore — raved; — she approached me in mimicry of my violence. —*I struck her !*"

When Wargrave's melancholy voice subsided into silence, the expression of my countryman, Tobin, involuntarily recurred to my mind—

> " The man who lays his hand,
> Save in the way of kindness, on a woman,
> Is a wretch, whom 'twere base flattery to call a coward."

" I know not what followed this act of brutality," cried Wargrave, rousing himself. " I have a faint remembrance of kneeling, imploring, and offering the sacrifice of my life in atonement for such ingratitude. But I have a very strong one of the patient immobility which, from that moment, poor Mary assumed in my presence! She jested no more;—she never laughed again.—What worlds would I have given had she remonstrated—defended herself—resented the injury. But no! from that fatal night, like the enchanted princess in the story, she became converted into marble whenever her husband approached her. I fancied—so conscious are the guilty—that she sometimes betrayed an apprehension of leaving our child in the room alone with me. Perhaps she thought me mad? She was right. The brief insanity inspired by wine had alone caused me to raise my hand against her."

" But you had no reason to suppose that, on *this* occasion, Mrs. Wargrave again conferred with her family touching your conduct?"—

" No reason; yet I did suppose it. I knew the secret had been kept from her brothers; for, if not, fine manly fellows as they were, nothing would have induced them again to sit at my board. But there *was* a person whose interference between me and my wife I dreaded more than theirs; a brother of Sophy Cavendish, who had loved Mary from her childhood, and wooed her, and been dismissed shortly after her acquaintance with myself. That fellow I never could endure! Horace Cavendish was the reverse of his sister; grave, even to dejection; cold and dignified in his demeanour; sententious, taciturn, repulsive. Mary had a great opinion of him, although she had preferred the vivacity of my manner, and the impetuosity of my character. But now that these qualities had been turned against herself, might not a revulsion of feeling cause her to regret her cousin?—She must have felt that Horace Cavendish would have invited an executioner to hack his arm off, rather than raise it against a woman! No provocation would have caused *him* to address her in those terms of insult, in which, on more than one occasion, I had indulged. I began to hate him, for I felt *little* in his presence. I saw that he was my superior in temper and breeding: that he would have made a happier woman of my wife. Yet I had no pretext for dismissing him my house. He came, and came, and sat there

day after day, arguing upon men and things, in his calm, measured, dispassionate voice. He could not but have seen that he was odious to me; yet he had not the delicacy to withdraw from our society. Perhaps he thought his presence necessary to protect his cousin?—Perhaps he thought I was not to be trusted with the deposit of her happiness?—"

"But surely," said I beginning to dread the continuation of his recital, "surely, after what had already occurred, you were careful to refrain from the stimulants which had betrayed you into an unworthy action?"

"Right;—I *was* careful. My temperance was that of an anchorite. On the pretext of health, I refrained many months from tasting wine; and became myself again. My brothers-in-law called me milksop! I cared not what they called me. The current of my blood ran cool and free. I wanted to conquer back the confidence of my wife."

"But perhaps this total abstinence rendered the ordeal still more critical, when you were compelled occasionally to resume your former habits?"

"Right again:—I was storing a magazine against myself! There occurred a family festival from which I could not absent myself;—the wedding of Sophy Cavendish. Even my wife relaxed in her habitual coldness towards me,

and requested me to join the party. We met;—a party of some thirty—giggling, noisy, brainless,—to jest and to be merry. It was settled that I must 'drink the bride's health;' and Mrs. Wargrave extended her glass towards mine, as if to make it a pledge of reconciliation. How eagerly I quaffed it!—The champagne warmed my heart. Of my free will, I took a second glass. The bridegroom was to be toasted; then the family into which Sophy was marrying; then the family she was quitting. At length the health of Mrs. Wargrave was proposed. Could I do otherwise than honour it in a bumper?—I looked towards her for further encouragement—further kindness; but, instead of the expected smile, beheld her pale, trembling, anxious. My kindling glances and heated countenance perhaps reminded her of the fatal night which had been the origin of our misunderstanding. Yes, she trembled; and in the midst of her agitation, I saw, or fancied I saw, a look of sympathy and good understanding pass between her and Horace Cavendish. I turned fiercely towards him. He regarded me with contempt!—That look at least I did not misinterpret:—*but I revenged it!*"

Involuntarily I rose from the parapet, and walked a few paces towards the frigate, in order that Wargrave might recover breath and composure. He followed me—he clung to my arm:—

the rest of his narrative was spoken almost in a whisper.

" In the mood which had now taken possession of me, it was easy to give offence; and Cavendish appeared no less ready than myself. We quarelled:—Mary's brother attempted to pacify us, but the purpose of both was settled. I saw that he looked upon me as a venomous reptile to be crushed; and I looked upon *him* as the lover of Mary. One of us must die to extinguish such deadly hatred.—We met at sunrise.—Both were sober then —I shot him through the heart!"

" I had once the misfortune to act as second in a mortal duel, my dear Wargrave," said I; —" I know how to pity you."

" Not *you!*"—faltered my companion, shuddering with emotion. " You may know what it is to contemplate the ebbing blood, the livid face, the leaden eye of a victim; to see him carried log-like from the field; to feel that many lips are cursing you—many hearts upbraiding you; but you cannot estimate the agony of a position such as mine with regard to Mary. I surrendered myself to justice; took no heed of my defence. Yet surely many must have loved me;—for, on the day of trial, hundreds of witnesses came forward to attest my humanity, my generosity, my mildness of nature."

" Mildness!"—

" Ay!—Save when under that fatal influence, (the influence which stimulates my lips this very moment,) my disposition is gentle and forbearing. But they adduced something which almost made me long to refute their evidence in my favour. Many of our mutual friends attested upon oath that the deceased had been observed to *seek occasion* of giving me offence;—that he had often spoken of me disparagingly, threateningly; that he had been heard to say I *deserved* to die!

" I was now sure that Mary had taken him into her confidence; and yet it was by my wife's unceasing exertions that the mass of evidence had been collected in my favour.—I was acquitted.—The court rang with acclamations; for I was 'the only son of my mother, and she was a widow;' and the name of Wargrave commanded respect and love from many, both in *her* person and that of my wife. The Cavendish family had not availed itself mercilessly against my life. I left the court 'without a blemish upon my character,' and with gratitude for the good offices of hundreds. I was not yet quite a wretch.

" But I had not seen Mary! On the plea of severe indisposition, she had refrained from visiting me in prison; and now, that all danger was over, I rejoiced she had been spared the humiliation of such an interview. On the eve of my trial, I wrote to her; expressing my wishes

and intentions towards herself and our child, should the event prove fatal; and inviting her to accompany me instantly to the continent, should the laws of my country spare my life. We could not remain in the centre of a family so cruelly disunited,—in a home so utterly desecrated. I implored her, too, to allow my aged mother to become our companion, that she might sanction my attempts in a new career of happiness and virtue. But, although relieved by this explanation of my future views, I trembled when I found myself once more on the threshold of home. To meet her again—to fall once more upon the neck of my poor mother, whose blindness and infirmities had forbidden her to visit me in durance!—What a trial!—The shouts of the multitude were dying away in the distance; my sole companion was a venerable servant of my father's, who sat sobbing by my side. Joseph had attended as witness at the trial. He was dressed in a suit of deep mourning, probably in token of the dishonour of his master's house.

"'The windows are closed,' said I, looking anxiously upwards, as the carriage stopped. 'Has Mrs. Wargrave—has my mother quitted town?'

"'There was no use distressing you, Master William, so long as you was in trouble,' said the old man, grasping my arm. 'My poor old

mistress has been buried these six weeks;—she died of a stroke of apoplexy, the day after you surrendered yourself. We buried her, Sir, by your father.'

"'And my wife?' said I, as soon as I could recover my utterance.

"'I don't rightly understand,—I can't quite make out,—I believe, Sir, you will find a letter,' said my grey-headed companion, following me closely into the house.

"'From Mary?'—

"'Here it is,' he replied, opening a shutter of the cold, grim, cheerless room and pointing to the table.

"'From Mary?'—I again reiterated, as I snatched it up. 'No! *not* from Mary; not even from any member of her family; not even from any friend,—from any acquaintance. *It was a lawyer's letter;* informing me, with technical precision, that 'his client, Mrs. Mary Wargrave, conceiving she had just cause and provocation to withdraw herself from my roof, had already taken up her abode with her family; that she was prepared to defend herself, by the strong arm of the law, against any opposition I might offer to her design; but trusted the affair would be amicably adjusted. His client, Mrs. Mary Wargrave, moreover demanded no other maintenance than the trifle allowed by her marriage settlement, for

her separate use. Instead of accompanying me to the continent, she proposed to reside with her brothers.'

"And it was by the hand of a lawyer's clerk I was to learn all this! The woman—the wife *whom I had struck*—was prepared to plead 'cruelty' against me in a court of justice, rather than live with the murderer of her minion!—She knew to what a home I was returning; she knew that my household gods were shattered; and at such a moment abandoned me!'

"'Drink this, Master William,' said the poor old man, returning to my side with a salver and a bottle of the Madeira which had been forty years in his keeping. 'You want support, my dear boy;—drink this.'

"'Give it me,' cried I, snatching the glass from his hands. 'Another—another!—I *do* want support; for I have still a task to perform. Stop the carriage; I am going out. Another glass!—I *must* see Mrs. Wargrave!—Where is she?'

"'Three miles off, Sir, at Sir William's. My mistress is with her elder brother, Sir. You can't see her to-night. Wait till morning; wait till you are more composed. You will lose your senses with all these cruel shocks!'

"'I *have* lost my senses!'—I exclaimed, throwing myself again into the carriage. 'And

therefore I must see her,—*must* see her before I die.'

"And these frantic words were constantly on my lips till the carriage stopped at the gate of Sir William Barbazon. I would not suffer it to enter, I traversed the court-yard on foot; I wished to give no announcement of my arrival. It was dusk. The servant did not recognise me, when having entered the offices by a side door, I demanded of a strange servant admittance to Mrs. Wargrave. The answer was such as I had anticipated. 'Mrs. Wargrave could see no one.—She was ill—had only just risen from her bed.' Nevertheless, I urged the necessity of an immediate interview. 'I must see her on business.' Still less. 'It was impossible for Mrs. Wargrave to see any person on business, as Sir William and Mr. Barbazon had just gone into town; and she was quite alone, and much indisposed.'

"'Take in this note,' said I, tearing a blank leaf from my pocket book, and folding it to represent a letter. And following with caution the servant I had despatched on my errand, I found my way to the door of Mary's apartment. It was the beginning of spring. The invalid was setting in a large arm-chair before the fire, with her little boy asleep in her arms. I had preceded the servant into the room; and, by the imperfect

fire-light, she mistook me for the medical attendant she was expecting.

" 'Good evening, Doctor,' said she, in a voice so faint and tremulous, that I could scarcely recognise it for hers. 'You will find me better to-night. But why are you so late?'

" 'You will, perhaps, find *me* too early,' said I, placing myself resolutely behind her chair, 'unless you are disposed to annul the instrument with which you have been pleased to complete the measure of your husband's miseries. Do not tremble, Madam; do not shudder; do not faint. You have no personal injuries to apprehend. I am come here, a broken-hearted man, to learn my award of life or death.' And in spite of my false courage, I staggered to the wall, and leaned against it for support.

" 'My brothers are absent,' faltered Mary. 'I have no counsellor at hand to act as mediator between us.'

" 'For which reason I hazard this appeal. I am here to speak with my own lips to your own ears,—to your own heart.—Let its unbiassed impulses condemn me or absolve me. Do not decide upon the suggestions of others.'

" 'I *have* decided,' murmured Mrs. Wargrave, —'*irrevocably*.'

" 'No, you have *not*!' said I, again approaching her; 'for you have decided without listening

to the defence of your husband—to the appeal of nature.—Mary, Mary!—have you so soon forgot the vows of eternal unity breathed in the presence of God?—On what covenant did you accept my hand, my name, my tenderness?—On that of a merciful compromise with the frailties of human nature; 'for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health.' It *has* been for *worse*, for I have been perverse, and wayward, and mad;—it *has* been for *poorer*, for my good name is taken from me;—it *has* been for sickness for a heavy sickness is on my soul. But is the *covenant* less binding? Are you not still my wife?—my wife whom I adore,—my wife whom I have injured,—my wife, whose patience I would requite by a whole life of homage and adoration,—my wife who once vowed a vow before the Lord, that forsaking all other, she would cleave to *me* alone?—Mary, no human law can contravene that primal statute.—Mary, you have no right to cast from you the father of your child.'

"'It is for my child's sake that I seek to withdraw from his authority,' said Mrs. Wargrave with more firmness than might have been expected; a firmness probably derived from the contact of the innocent and helpless being she pressed to her bosom. 'No! I *cannot* live with you again; my confidence is gone, my respect diminished. This boy, as his faculties become

developed, would see me tremble in your presence; would learn that I fear you; that'———

"'That you despise me!—speak out, Madam; speak out!'

"'That I *pity* you', continued Mary, resolutely; 'that I pity you, as one who has the reproach of blood upon his hand, and the accusation of ruffianly injury against a woman, on his conscience.'

"'And such are the lessons you will teach him; lessons to lead him to perdition, to damnation; for, by the laws of the Almighty, Madam, however your kindred or your lawyers may inspire you, the father, no less than the mother, must be honoured by his child.'

"'It is a lesson I would scrupulously uphold to him: and, to *secure* his obedience, it is needful that he should live an alien from his father's roof.—Wargrave, our child must not grow up in observation of our estrangement.'—

"'Then, by Heaven, my resolution is taken! Still less shall his little life be passed in watching the tears shed by his mother for the victim of an adultrous passion!—You have appealed to the laws: by the laws let us abide. The child is mine by right, by enforcement. Live where you will—defy me from what shelter you please; —but this little creature whom you have con-

stituted my enemy, remains with *me!* Surrender him to me, or dread the consequences!"

"You did not?" — I incoherently gasped, seizing Wargrave by the arm, and dreading—I knew not what.

"Have I not told you," he replied, in a voice which froze the blood in my veins, "that, before quitting home, I had swallowed half a bottle of Madeira?—My frame was heated, my brain maddened!—I saw in the woman before me only the minion, the mourner of Horace Cavendish.—I had no longer a wife."

"And you dared to injure her?"

"Right, boy! that is the word,—*dared!* It was cowardly, was it not? brutal, monstrous! —Say something that may spare my own bitter self-accusations!"—

Involuntarily I released myself from his arm.

"Yes! Mary, like yourself, prepared for violence at my hands," continued Wargrave, scarcely noticing the movement; "for instinctively she attempted to rise and approach the bell; but, encumbered by the child, or by her own weakness, she fell back in her chair.—'Don't wake him!' said she in a faint, piteous voice, as if after all, *his* helplessness constituted her best defence.

"'Give him up, then, at once. Do you think

I do not love him?—Do you think I shall be less careful of him than yourself?—Give him up to his father.'

" For a moment, as if overcome, she seemed attempting to unclasp the little hand which, even in sleep, clung tenderly to her night-dress. For a moment she seemed to recognise the irrestibility of my claim.

" The carriage waits,' said I sternly. ' Where is his nurse?'

" ' I am his nurse,' cried Mary, bursting into an agony of tears. ' I will go with him. To retain my child I will consent to live with you again.'

" ' With *me?*—And am I a worm, that you think to trample on me thus? Live with *me,* whom you have dishonoured with your pity, your contempt, your preference of another?—Rather again stand arraigned before a criminal tribunal, than accept such a woman as my wife!'

" ' As a *servant,* then;—let me attend as a servant on this little creature, so dear to me, so precious to me, so feeble, so'———

" ' Is it Cavendish's brat, that you plead for him so warmly?'—cried I, infuriated that even my child should be preferred to *me.* And I now attempted to remove him by force from her arms.

" ' Help! help! help!' — faltered the feeble,

half-fainting mother. But no one came, and I persisted.—Did you ever attempt to hold a struggling child—a child that others were struggling to retain—a young child—a soft, frail, feeble child?—And why did she resist?—Should not she, woman as she was, have known that mischief would arise from such contact?—She who had tended those delicate limbs, that fragile frame?—The boy wakened from his sleep—was screaming violently. He struggled, and struggled, and moaned, and gasped. But, on a sudden, his shrieks ceased. He was still, silent, breathless"———

"Dead?" cried I.

"So she imagined at the moment, when, at the summons of her fearful shrieks, the servants rushed into the room. But no, I had not again become a murderer; a new curse was in store for me. When medical aid was procured, it was found that a limb was dislocated,—the spine injured,—the boy a cripple for life!"

"What must have been his father's remorse!"

"His father was spared the intelligence. It was not fourteen months that I was removed from the private madhouse, to which, that fatal night, I was conveyed, a raving maniac. The influence of wine, passion, horror, had induced epilepsy; from which I was only roused to a state of frenzy. Careful treatment and solitude gra-

dually restored me. Legal steps had been taken by the Barbazon family during my confinement; and my mutilated boy is placed, by the Court of Chancery, under the guardianship of his mother. For some time after my recovery I became a wanderer on the continent, with the intention of wasting the remnants of my blighted existence in restless obscurity. But I soon felt that the best propitiation, the best sacrifice to offer to my injured wife and child, was an attempt to conquer for their sake, an honourable position in society. I got placed on full-pay in a regiment appointed to a foreign station. I made over to my boy the whole of my property. I pique myself on living on my pay,—on drinking no wine, — on absenting myself from all the seductions of society. I lead a life of penance, of penitence, of pain.—But, some day or other, my little victim will learn the death of his father, and feel that he devoted his wretched days to the duties of an honourable profession, in order to spare him further dishonour as *the son of a suicide.*"—

"Thank God!" was my murmured ejaculation, when at this moment I perceived the boat of the Astræa, whose approach enabled me to cover my emotion with the bustle of parting. There was not a word of consolation—of palliation, to be offered to such a man.—He had indeed af-

forded me a fearful commentary on my text. Never before had I duly appreciated the perils and dangers of WINE !—

" And it is to such a stimulus," murmured I, as I slowly rejoined my companions, " that judge and juror recur for strength to inspire their decrees; to such an influence, that captain and helmsman turn for courage in the storm; to such a counsellor, the warrior refers his manœuvres on the day of battle; nay, that the minister, the chancellor, the sovereign himself, dedicate the frailty of their nature !—That human life, that human happiness, should be subjected to so devilish an instrument !—Against all other enemies we fortify ourselves with defence; to this master fiend, we open the doors of the citadel."

But my meditations were cut short by the joyous chorus of a drinking song, with which Lord Thomas's decoctions inspired the shattered reason of the Commandants, superior and inferior of His Majesty's Ship the Astræa !

NAPOLEON AT FONTAINEBLEAU.

NAPOLEON AT FONTAINEBLEAU.

Forests are supposed to constitute the exclusive domain of romance writers; even as lakes have been appropriated by poets and ballad-mongers. The Schwarzwald and the Odenwald extend their gloomy shades through many a horrification in three volumes, or even five. Sherwood and Needwood, with the connivance of the Minerva Press, have bid us "Stand and deliver" till we trembled at the very sight of a furze bush; while twenty romancers have made us as sick of "The New Forest," as a season at Southampton.

Since Sir Walter's "Ivanhoe" presented the world with a view of forest scenery, more picturesque than the sketches of Gilpin, or the realities of Hobhima, we have been favoured with such a tedious infinity of copies, that we verily believe we could travel from Dan to Beersheba, (*i. e.* from Sand-Pit Gate to Fern Hill,) in the lordly shades of Windsor, and find "all barren!"

Nevertheless, there *does* exist a Forest for

which we must admit an especial predilection;—within the limits of civilization—no intrenchment on the property of Fenimore Cooper—no section of the ground of Himalaya Fraser,—nay! within a morning's drive of a capital city; yet possessing features as wild and characteristic as Rosa might have delighted to paint, or Ariosto to depict, as the rendezvous of some half-chivalrous, half-magic encounter.

The Forest of Fontainebleau,—still savage in its scenery as when the Crusader-King, St. Louis, was wont to term it "*Ses déserts chéris*,"—still lonely as when Napoleon, who loved it with a similar predilection, used to prick forward in advance of his officious court, to enjoy its reveries in its *haute futaie*,—is now depopulated even of the superfluity of game, which, during the ascendancy of the elder Bourbon princes, and the hunting days of the booby-hero of the Trocadero, was supposed to threaten it with extinction. Were all the royal forests of France equally devastated, the office of Grand Verderer would become a sinecure; for, unless when that equivocal compeer of the Montmorencys and St. Simons, the Duc de Stackpoole, contrives to unite with his own pack of stag-hounds the *meutes* of two or three neighbouring nobles, to get up a Chevy Chase, grievously resembling the Epping Hunt, the ancient oaks of Fontainebleau forget the very

echo of a Réveillée! The tumult of hounds and horns, however, is of rare occurrence; and during the summer season, not a soul is stirring in the forest, unless some botanical student from the *Pays Latin*, with his wallet on his shoulder and his herbal in his hand; or some disciple of Camille Roqueplan or Isabey, standing rapt and inspired among the rocks of Franchard, or the precipices of La Salle, to dash into his book of studies the light outline of some weeping birch, or hint the solemn grandeur of that kingly stem,—unique even among oaks,—*le bouquet du Roi.*

Yet even these metropolitan loungers, and the cockney hunting-train of a Birmingham Duke, are incapable of deteriorating the venerable grace of Fontainebleau. Its masses of granite, resembling colossal heads of Druids, peeping forth from the shade, speak of times long anterior to the voluptuous triumphs of Diana of Poitiers, whence date the meretricious splendours of the palace; and the *Galerie des Cerfs*, which witnessed the wanton murder of Christina of Sweden's Monaldeschi, or the *Galerie de Henri IV.*, where Sully pleaded in vain a remission of Biron's sentence of execution, are things but of yesterday, compared with the Gorges d'Apremont, or the crags of the Mont-Aigu.

The Palace of Fontainebleau, indeed, in spite

of every emendation perpetrated by every prince succeeding the brother-in-law of our own bluff Harry, retains a most antique and quaint appearance; yet antiquated as it is, its peaked roofs and overhanging bartizans are a world too modern for the mossy frame of sylvan verdure with which the picture is encircled. Pious anchorites have sanctified themselves in the recesses of the Forest, as the hermitages of the Weeping Rock, and of La Madelaine, remain to attest; and hermits might fast and pray there still without much molestation from the children of this world.

Charles X., had he been inclined to emulate the example of the Corsican, and execute his abdication in the palace of the Fountain of Fine Water, or *Fontaine Belle Eau,* might have retired thereafter to one of its sylvan lodges, and ended his days as holily as Charles V., in his peevish cell of St. Just. The Royal Forest might have formed an appropriate retreat for the repentance of a sovereign:—lordly, lofty, gloomy, worthy to overshadow the spirit of the blood-stained *Roi de la Mitraille!*

It was during the brilliant ascendancy of Napoleon, however, that Fontainebleau attained its highest pitch of dignity,—at the period when a Vicar of God was brought captive to its gates, and kings and princes yielded tribute to the foot-

stool of its warrior-sovereign,—or as Béranger describes it,—

> " L'époque où fécondant l'histoire,
> Sa grande épée, effroi des nations,
> Resplendissante au soleil de la gloire,
> En fit aur la France rejaillir les rayons !"

It was to afford a fitting asylum to Pius VII., when he visited France to place the Imperial Crown upon the brows of the hero of Marengo, that the palace of Fontainebleau was raised from the degradation into which it had fallen at the period of the First Revolution; and its reparations were completed, in order to adorn, with becoming splendour, the prison of the same spiritual Prince, when, eight years afterwards, he was installed there in durance, with the view of intimidating the vicegerent of Christendom into the cession of his temporal sovereignty. There, too, Charles V. abode in temporal seclusion, after abdicating the government of Spain and the Indies to the Imperial Conqueror. Fontainebleau appeared to have been transformed into a sort of regal *Salpétrière*, for the reformation of offending potentates!

But if an especial suite of apartments became consecrated to this important purpose, the main body of the building (which has been compared by English travellers to a *rendez-vous* of palaces,

rather than a single and separate edifice) was still occupied as the Imperial residence of the most brilliant court of modern Europe. Thither, every autumn, the Emperor repaired, as to a favourite hunting seat; and the days seemed come again when Louis XIV., gliding with histrionic dignity through the stately saloons of Versailles, the palace of his own creation, made it his pride to be accosted by his courtiers with intercessions for the honour of "following the Court in its ensuing journey to Fontainebleau;" an event which, at one time, constituted one of its chief enlivenments.

Brilliant, however, as was that scene of the eighteenth century,—when Molière commemorated the sojourn of his Royal patron by the production of the "Tartuffe," and Racine, by bringing forward some tragic *chef-d'œuvre*,—the *Cours des Fontaines* exhibited a still gayer pageant, when crowded by the unparallelled *cortège* of courtiers, which enabled the Emperor of France to create an antechamber for the kings that waited at his levee!

The two Henrys of France and the first Francis may have added to the regal edifice the splendid galleries still bearing the names; but it remained for the son of a Corsican notary to form the *Antechambre des Rois!* Beautiful women—and the most beautiful among them were the nearest

kindred of Napoleon,—men of renown—and the most famous were those who had confronted danger nearest to his person,—thronged the antique saloons of Fontainebleau; the golden bees embroidered upon whose canopies of velvet seemed distinctive of a new era in the history of the government of the country. The whole scene presented a gorgeous masque of mimic majesty,—chivalrous as the court of Francis I., magnificent as that of Louis le Grand, and a thousandfold more animated than either.

It was, perhaps, that the personages of the drama, less perfect in their parts, were more attentive to the getting up of the piece—it was, perhaps, that their physical and moral impulses, unsubdued by the influence of the indolence divine of Royal nature, betrayed a stronger and more vivid temperament; but certain it is, that never were fêtes so brilliant—never courts so stirring, as those presided over by Josephine, and graced by the charms of the Reine Hortense, and the Princesses Pauline, Elisa, and Caroline, the sisters of Napoleon. The Bourbons might, and may, exhibit their household splendours as ceremoniously as they will; but those levees of upstart kings—those quadrilles of plebeian queens—those *carrousels* of *parvenu* knights, whose spurs were in reality the meed of valour,—exceeded all preceding pomps, as well as any that may have subsequently supplied their place. They rode,

they danced, they dressed, they curtsied, they *congeed*, as if they could not too strenuously exercise the privileges of the greatness so singularly thrust upon them; and, spurred on by reminiscences of the sordid penury with which their youth had been environed—or, perhaps, by a prescience of the utter ruin ultimately to be called down on their heads by the ambition of the insatiable invader of thrones and dominions,—sported on painted pinions in the sunshine of Napoleon's glory, so long as it was permitted to irradiate their remarkable destiny.

Nor were their capacities of enjoyment ever more liberally taxed than at Fontainebleau. *There*, the Emperor, luxuriating in momentary relaxation from the toils of sovereignty, and giving access only to those ministers with whom it was indispensable to be in immediate communication, indulged less eagerly in the recreation of the chase, than in the pleasures of unrestrained intercourse with such persons as really shared his confidence and affection: and the calumniated Napoleon was a man of warm and strong affections. Those who approached nearest his person, and who have not yet betrayed him by manufacturing a book at his expense, admit that he was the honestest man and *le plus bon homme* of all the Imperial Court; or, to borrow the expression of his brother Jerome, "*mieux que tout ce qui l'entourait.*"

Though notoriously the victim of Josephine's coquetry during their early days of marriage, how fervent and honourable is the affection poured forth by the husband, in the correspondence between them published by her daughter Hortense!—what truth—what simplicity, in every expression!—what nobleness of purpose in every counsel imparted! While the finical and *minaudière* ex-Marchioness addressed herself to the task of conciliating the French nation by the graces of her smile and the richness of her laces and cachemires, *he* was bidding her be "generous but economical;"—economical of her money, which was the people's—of her tenderness, which ought to have been *his;* and of her time, which she was too apt to bestow upon every obsequious courtier and gossiping dowager. How patient too, did he show himself under the thwartings occasioned by the intriguing spirit of his brothers!—how blinded by his affection for his sisters!—and when enlightened by the officious jealousy of Josephine, how susceptible to their shame — how gentle in their condemnation! Above all, how doatingly—how thoroughly—a *father!*

Meanwhile, amid all his policy,—all his tact,—all his dexterous appeals to the national vanity of the French, in the pomp and splendour of his Court,—it was, in truth, with a view of gratifying

the predilections of the Empress and her female train,—the Mesdames Junot, Maret, Marmont, Duchâtelet, Regnault, St. Jean d'Angely, Visconti, and others,—that the halls of Fontainebleau were occasionally illuminated for the display of masks and festivals; and its forest causeways levelled and made smooth, to admit their participation in the pleasures of the chase.

At the close of one of these festivals,—a ball given preparatory to the departure of the Emperor for a new campaign, a *fête*, (no offence to the Montmorencys, the Noailles, or the Grammonts,) as graceful and brilliant as the more legitimate Courts of Fontainebleau ever witnessed,—the gay circle was dissolved, the lights extinguished, and the ushers and chamberlains, having paraded the state-apartments to ascertain that all was safe, had retired in their turn to rest. Nothing remained in evidence of watchfulness but the Captain of the Guards yawning at his post, the numerous sentries *en faction* in the various quadrangles of the palace, with here and there a light streaming from the windows of some vestibule or staircase, such as in the abode of even the most frugal and self-secure of sovereigns,—of a citizen-king for instance,—gives evidence that there must be *no night* within the purlieus of a palace—that perpetual vigil is indispensable to secure the safety of an anointed head!

All was quiet, save the tinkling of the Fountain of Ulysses in the great court, and the harsh croaking of the frogs in the adjoining lake; when, on a sudden, a slight tumult became perceptible in the *Cour de la Fontaine*; and a few stragglers, in complete dishabille, were seen hurriedly traversing the corridors leading to the *Aile des Princes*. Sentries were challenged, and gates unclosed! The stir and bustle increased. Corvisart, the Emperor's favourite physician, had been hastily summoned from his bed;—what, *what* could be the matter? Was Josephine, whom often already a remote hint of the premeditated repudiation had thrown into hysterics, again attacked with *migraine?* Had Madame Mère fasted too long over her beads? Or was the Princess Borghese suffering from some of her imaginary heart-aches, or head-aches? Vain toil to guess! Some hundred or so of young and fanciful beauties just then lodged under the peaked roofs of Fontainebleau, were enough to afford practice and perplexity to Galen and all his sons!

But it was not for the sake of anything in the shape of woman,—no! not even of Madame de Waleska herself,—that Constant would have presumed to steal down the little circular staircase leading from the Emperor's apartment to the *Cabinet Topographique;* where, on the eve of his departure for the grand army, he was engaged in

investigating a map, pricked out subsequently to the Military Council of the morning, by the hands of Baron Fain, and Baron Bacler d'Albe.

Leaning over a table overhung by a shaded lamp, and covered with maps and plans, Napoleon's attention was engrossed in dictating notes to his aide-de-camp, when a slight knock at the door announced some privileged person: and, with a face foretelling the nature of a tragic volume, the *premier valet de chambre* made his appearance.

"What is the matter, Constant?" cried the Emperor, hastily, apprehending he knew not what from this unprecedented interruption.

"Sire, with your Majesty's gracious permission, I have ventured to intrude, in order——"

"Bah! Speak out,—to the point!—What has happened?"

"Cardinal Caprara, Sire, is expiring!"——

"*Après?*" inquired Napoleon, calmly insinuating his forefinger into his waistcoat pocket, and regaling himself with a pinch of snuff, as irreverently as if the "*après*" of the act of dissolution of a member of the Sacred College could possibly fall within the precognition of a valet-de-chambre!

"Sire! your Majesty's goodness will, I trust, pardon my officiousness; but I consider it my

duty to acquaint your Majesty, previous to the fatal catastrophe, that——"

"Bah!" again interrupted the Emperor,—never so completely "*le petit caporal,*" as with a military map before him, and a perspective of triumph opening from its indications.

—"That his Eminence has fallen a victim to *poison,*" continued Constant, satisfied that it was his business to persevere in his relation.

"*To poison?*" ejaculated Napoleon, turning round short on the valet-de-chambre.

"*To poison?*" reiterated Fain. "Poisoned in the Royal Palace of Fontainebleau!—a Prince of the Holy Roman Church—the Nuncio of the Pope—poisoned!—*Quelle horreur!*"

"This becomes serious," said the Emperor, coolly. "Who is with him?—Who has been sent for?"

"The Bishop of Meaux, Sire, is with his Eminence."

"A Bishop!—why not a physician?—Where is Corvisart,—where is Ivan?"——

"And the Almoner of Her Imperial Majesty," continued Constant, "is about to administer"—

"Extreme Unction, no doubt! when an emetic might prove the Cardinal's salvation!"

"Meanwhile, if your Majesty will permit me to observe," said the aide-de-camp, abruptly, "this unfortunate event may lead to most cala

mitous conclusions. Cardinal Caprara possesses the personal regard and confidence of His Holiness; and his mission in France, bearing reference to so delicate and personal a question, inferences might possibly arise."

"You are right!" cried the Emperor. "I should be on the spot! and the more so that the Cardinal appears to be surrounded by a tribe of fools, more idiotic, if possible, and old-womanish than himself. Constant,—my hat. Be in waiting in the library till my return."

And having hurriedly traversed the corridor leading from the Royal library to a small door opening under the grand staircase of the *Fer à Cheval*, the Emperor hastened across the courts of the two intervening quadrangles with such rapidity, that the sentry at the first post had scarcely carried his hand to his musket to present arms, when his Majesty reached the second. All was in confusion round the entrance, and on the staircase leading to the Cardinal's apartments. The doors of the antechamber stood wide open, and two *garçons de bain* were squabbling in the saloon; every person in authority having pushed forward to the bedside of the dying Churchman.

"Did Caprara sup with me to-night?" inquired the Emperor, as he crossed the vestibule, to Fain, who was closely following.

"Your Majesty forgets, perhaps,—the *fête*, —the ball——"

"True, true!—He was served, then, in his own apartments?" continued Napoleon, addressing a domestic in the livery of the household, who was about to scud away on recognising the Emperor. "Where did his Eminence sup to-night?—who was present?—who furnished the repast?"

"His Eminence supped in his own chamber, Sire, attended by his own almoner, on dishes especially prepared by his own domestics," interposed the aide-de-camp, who had overheard the question, and was aware of Napoleon's fondness for succinct intelligence.

"So much the better!" muttered the Emperor, taking breath. "It is probable, then, that there may be no poison in the case. He may be dying of a surfeit."

But when, in another minute, Napoleon penetrated into the bed-chamber, there was no mistaking the symptoms of the Nuncio for those of an indigestion!—Churchman or Layman—*gourmand* or anchoret—short-necked or long—it was no ordinary seizure which had rendered his face so livid, his lips so black, his nostrils so distended, nay, his eyes so fixed and sightless, that even the entrance of the Emperor produced no change of countenance in the moribund!

"Alas! alas! dying without the consolation of the Church!" sighed the Bishop of Meaux, as he let fall upon the coverlid the hand he had been holding in his own, in the hope of discerning some token of amendment.

"Dying before half the objects of his mission were accomplished!" murmured his Eminence's Secretary, who had expected to find his own services in the affair requited with a full benefice.

"Dying in a foreign country, so far from our *bella Italia!*" faltered a poor Neapolitan *marmiton* of his suite, who had crept towards the room, and was blubbering unheeded on the threshold.

"What was served to the Cardinal at supper?" inquired Napoleon of the latter, tapping him smartly on the shoulder, ere his own entrance was noticed by those administering to the dying man, or at least fixing their whole attention on his countenance.

"*Ahi, ahi!*" sobbed the lad, suddenly looking up, and trembling with consternation on perceiving by whom he was so cavalierly accosted. "*Madre di Dio!—Sua Maestà!*"

"I ask you what was served to His Eminence at supper?" persisted the Emperor. "Answer quickly and briefly, for his sake and your own!"—

"Mushrooms, Sire!" interposed Fain, who

had already obtained from the Cardinal's *maître-d'hôtel*, the desired intelligence. "*Des Oronges sautés à l'huile, à l'Italienne*, by his own cook."

"*Coglioni!*" ejaculated Bonaparte, all the Corsican kindling in him at the word. "Not a genuine Orange is to be found on this side the Alps! They have poisoned him with some noxious fungus!—*Des Oronges sautés à l'huile!*—Let Paulet be instantly sent for. It may not yet be too late to try a counter-poison."

And satisfied that a supper of stewed mushrooms would afford a very natural cause to misgiving Europe for the sudden demise even of a Cardinal, the Emperor returned to his surveys as speedily as he had quitted them.

"So, then, *Monsieur le Dróle!*" cried he, seizing Constant by the ear as he traversed the *Bibliothéque*, where the valet-de-chambre was in waiting, to enter the topographical study,—"You think proper, it seems, to break in upon my privacy, because a pampered priest chooses to overeat himself?"

And Constant, discovering in an instant from the familiar mode of his Imperial Majesty's address, that he considered Caprara in no real danger, and was no little pleased to find the case less urgent than he had been led to expect ventured to reply, that "another time, under

such circumstances, he would shew more discretion."

"Another time, under such circumstances, (if ever another cook should be found in the Palace, of sufficient ignorance to serve up toadstools as an *entremét*,) do as I have done now—send for Doctor Paulet, who has passed his life *à s'enchampignoniser*, in studying the nature and properties of mushrooms, and do not interrupt *me, till* the ipecacuanha has done its worst."

"See Doctor Paulet to-night, before he quits the Cardinal, that you may be prepared with particulars when you wake me in the morning," was Napoleon's final adjuration, when, having officiated at his master's toilet, Constant was about to retire for the night, to receive the same services from his own valet-de-chambre, leaving the door of the Imperial Chamber to the guardianship of the faithful Rostan.

Unhappily, further intelligence on the subject awaited the *réveil* of the Emperor! Two words from Constant would have sufficed to acquaint the world that Paulet had administered an antidote, and that the Cardinal was out of danger; but while a Page of the Household was offering formal compliments to the Prince of the Church, on the part of their Imperial Majesties, the Duc d'Otrante had arrived from Paris, and was about to be admitted to an audience of the Emperor!—the

Duc d'Otrante,—the Joseph Fouché,—the Minister of Police,—whose name has been damned to everlasting fame, in France, as the able originator of a system of espionage, unique in the odium of its efficiency; and who was at that period forestalling the desires and projects of Napoleon, by preparing the way for his divorce, and the formation of a more auspicious matrimonial alliance.

"This is a sad affair, Sire, of the Cardinal Caprara," observed the *Chef de Police*, having completed the transactions which had motived his journey from the capital.

"*Sad?*" reiterated the Emperor. "I understood from Constant that Paulet answered for his life?"

"I met Doctor Paulet, Sire, as I entered the *Cour d'Honneur*."

"Well?"

"He assured me that there were no grounds for alarm,—that in a day or two his Eminence would be as well as ever"——

"And capable of supping a second time on a ragout of *fausses Oronges*!—Jackass!"———

"But is it *proved*, Sire, that the mushrooms *were* pernicious?"——

"*Proved!* You should have seen the Cardinal's face!—*purple* as his stockings! Many an unfortunate *gamin* has been deposited in the

dead-room of the Morgue, with twice as much life in his frame! *Pernicious!* Nothing but Paulet's skill could have saved him!"

"Your Majesty mistakes me. *Poisoned*, I admit him to have been; but my people here assured me that they have procured evidence that the mushrooms picked and selected yesterday, at the Cardinal's own suggestion, during a promenade to the Rocher de Montigny, were of the true and genuine Orange species. It seems that his Eminence's *piqueur*, aware of the ridicule incurred during their stay at Paris, by Caprara's proverbial parsimony, not choosing to be seen entering the palace gates, charged with a pannier of mushrooms, like the *baudet* of a market gardener, intrusted them accordingly to the hand of a wood-cutter working near the spot, who engaged to convey them to the Cardinal's kitchen. By this individual, they were assuredly changed on the road."

"Bah!" cried the Emperor. "Would you and your *mouchards* have me believe Caprara is a sufficiently great man, to have enemies among the wood-cutters of Fontainebleau? Poison a Cardinal?—They could do no more for me!—Besides, the people of these cantons still smack of Bourbon patronage, and are as pious as the prudes of the Faubourg St. Germain. I would warrant every knave of them to kiss the hem of

the petticoat-tail of the smallest member of the sacred conclave. Poison a Cardinal! They would as soon think of denying St. Peter!"

"Nevertheless," pursued Fouché, "my agents assert that Cardinal Caprara is detested by the people, as the supposed bearer of His Holiness's promise of assent to the project of your Majesty's divorce;" (involuntarily Napoleon turned his eyes towards the door affording access to his apartments, from those of the susceptible Josephine;) "nor need I remind you, Sire. that the extreme popularity of the Empress"——

"I know, I know!" interrupted Napoleon, who was indeed aware that the rumour of his repudiation of Josephine, had created a most unfavourable impression throughout the kingdom. "But do you pretend to insinuate that the French nation has entered into a conspiracy to poison Caprara, for having been the mere state-courier of Pius VII!—*Que diable!*—Josephine's party must, in that case, be stronger and more redoubtable than I have ever had cause to think it!"

"The young man pointed out to suspicion as the bearer of the mushrooms from Montigny to the Palace," resumed the Duc d'Otrante, repressing the sneer of his Imperial master, by proceeding at once to *facts*, "is one to whom the attention of my people at Fontainebleau has been

previously directed, as dangerous and involved in mysterious connexions."

"Under *surveillance*, then?"

"Under *surveillance*."

"And yet employed in the public works? Why, under such circumstances, allow him to be retained by the Inspector of the Royal Forests?"

Fouché replied only by a smile, manifestly implying, "To keep him under the cognizance of the Police."

"True!" replied the Emperor, replying to this tacit reply. "But it might be desirable that your people kept their *hands* as well as their eyes upon the fellow, instead of leaving him at liberty to spoil the supper and night-rest of a Prince of the Church. *Cospetto!* These mushrooms may yet chance to figure in a Papal Bull!"

The breakfast hour was now approaching, the one of all the four-and-twenty when Napoleon was most accessible to familiar intercourse; and Fouché seemed to profit by his increasing good-humour, in order to push still further the subject under discussion.

"In the apprehension that an unfavourable view of the affair might reach the Court of Rome," said he, "I have already caused this young man, this Guillot, to be arrested. It is a

token of respect due to the rank of Cardinal Caprara."

"Respect due to a broomstick!" muttered the *Petit Caporal*.

"Which motive might perhaps be held insufficient," pursued Fouché; "but that in spreading a net over a minnow, I hope to secure as fine a cock-salmon as ever wagged a fin within the meshes of the Police!"

"Aha!" cried Napoleon, who had been traversing the room, and now stopped short opposite the official operative, who might well be called (as Victor Hugo terms our English hangman) "*the royal right arm!*"

"Within the last six weeks," continued Fouché, "a mansion situated near the ferry of Valvin, which your Majesty once entertained thoughts of hiring, (but that the situation was scarcely secluded enough for the purpose,) as a residence for Madame de———"

"I know, I know!" hastily interrupted Bonaparte, vexed to find the organization of his Secret Police so admirable, that not even a casual expression of his own could escape its scrutiny. "Who lives there now?"

"The English *détenu*, Sire!—Monsieur le Général R———."

"*An English family at Fontainebleau?* An English *détenu*—an English General Officer?—

You must have planned this, Sir, for my especial annoyance! *Sacré nom de Dieu!*—Have I not expressly desired that these people might be kept out of my way? Last year, as we drove near the bridge at Verdun, on our way to Mayence, had not the English prisoners the audacity to greet me with hisses, and opprobrious epithets?"

"Which offence against your Imperial Majesty's person, half-a-dozen of them are still expiating in the dungeons of Bitche," replied Fouché, coolly. "But General R——— is scarcely to be classed among a tribe of fool-hardy midshipmen, such as the lads in question. For several years he has resided in all honour and tranquillity at Verdun; and it was but a few months ago that I received an application for a *permis de voyage* for his family, to pass two months at Fontainebleau, in order to try the effects of the *cure de raisin* for his only daughter, stated to be in the last stage of a decline. There was no plea for withholding from *him* a favour frequently conceded to English prisoners on parole; especially as your Majesty had then announced your intention of dividing the autumn between Rambouillet and St. Cloud. A passport was accordingly granted and General R—— established himself at the Pavillon de Valin"——

"At least, while residing so near the Palace,

you have placed his correspondence under scrutiny?"

"More particularly, Sire, since the General's lady, who is daughter to a member of the English Cabinet, keeps up constant intercourse with her family."

"And has anything—*transpired?*" said the Emperor, fixing a scrutinizing eye upon Fouché's countenance.

"Nothing, Sire," he replied, preparing to touch a point on which Napoleon was just then *peculiarly* sensitive to the sneers of the English press. "Nothing,—unless a few idle comments in the letters of Lady Emily R——, upon the age and personal coquetry of the Empress, as well as her unaccountable influence and popularity with the nation."

"Mere flippant woman's gossip!" said Napoleon, having recourse to his snuff box.

"But exactly of the kind to obtain ready currency in London; where any absurd slander relating to your Majesty's domestic circle is voraciously swallowed. I have, therefore suppressed the letters."

"Good!—but better still, had you kept these people away from Fontainebleau altogether. Send them back to Verdun without loss of time."

"I understand your Majesty's departure to

be fixed for to-morrow? The young lady is seriously indisposed; and, as a week remains unexpired of the General's *permis de séjour*"———

"At least, do not let it be *renewed*," cried Napoleon, and let me hear of no more English prisoners at Fontainebleau. "If they fall sick let them find some *orviétan*, less obnoxious to *me* than a course of Chasselas grapes. *En attendant*, what has this General to do with Caprara's mushrooms?"

"The young man named Guillot having been arrested this morning before day-break, and his papers secured——"

"Papers?"—The *papers* of a woodcutter?"

"We find reason to believe him a man of birth and education," continued the Minister of Police;—"bearer of a false passport; nay! *pour trancher le mot*,—the son of the emigrant Duc de la Roche Allier,—and here on a rendez-vous with his friend General R———, for the purpose of effecting negociations——"

"With the English Government?" cried Napoleon.

"No Sire,—with the people of Hartwell!"

"An emissary of the Bourbons—a secret emissary—*a spy*;—yet bearing the name of a family which dates its chivalry from the first crusade!"

"The young Count has learned his lesson,

Sire, in England; where, under your favour, spies are treated with the reverence due to the hazards of their arduous vocation. André, whom the Americans hanged, has a monument in the Royal Abbey of Westminster."

"My poor Fouché! which of your hangers-on has regaled your wounded vanity by that piece of information?" inquired the Emperor, laughing heartily at the fact, so *naively* boasted by his *chef de mouchards*. "But no matter! What have you done with this individual?"

"Sent him forward to Bicêtre."

"Have you reason to suppose he has connexions in the Faubourg St. Germain?"

"The most important!—nay, suspicions point at the very household of the Empress. Those two old jackanapes, the chamberlains, Count ———, and ———, cannot get rid of their Bourbon hankerings."

"And General R——?" demanded Napoleon, amused to perceive the pertinacity of Fouché's antipathy to everything and everybody connected with Josephine.

"Has rejected the proposal with which he was insulted. A paper in his hand-writing, Sire, was found in the cottage of the *soi-disant* Guillot, —a letter desiring him to set foot in his house no more. English officers possess a nice sense of

honour; and this R——— appears to be *un homme de bien !*"———

" *Comme un autre*, I suppose! But if young Allier's mission was thus infructuous, what has kept him at Fontainebleau ?"

"The young man's *arrière-pensées* are not easily to be developed," said the Duc d' Otrante. " It is probable he had an ulterior object in wishing to obtain access to the Palace, which he hoped to secure by offering his services to the Cardinal's people,—having previously been frustrated by the intervention of mine. I need scarcely, however, point out to your Majesty, that an emissary of the Bourbons may be inferred to cherish no great predilection for his Eminence, as being the avowed friend to a measure likely to give an heir to the Empire, and secure the downfal of their dynasty."

" Away with you!" cried the Emperor; " Asses as they are, the Bourbons and their agents are scarcely likely to fancy, that by poisoning a single Cardinal, they could circumvent all amicable intercourse between the Tuileries and the Vatican. Your people have outshot their mark. We have to thank Caprara's gluttony, as the accidental means of unravelling an execrable plot; but if the mushrooms *were* of a pernicious kind, trust me his Eminence has

no one to thank for the mistake, but the purblind, half-witted rascals of his own scurvy suite."

"As your Majesty pleases," replied the minister, taking the portfolio under his arm, preparatory to the ceremony of taking leave. "In that case, all further interference in the business is superfluous."

The Emperor, meanwhile, had taken his resolution. The day being one of those set apart for the chase, he was comparatively master of his time; and having signified to the Empress at her toilet, an intention to ride towards Melun, accompanied only by the Grand Marshal, Duroc, aide-de-camp on duty, he quitted the palace in the afternoon, without cortege or attendants. Having reached, at full speed, the Croix d'Augas, and thence diverged into one of the lateral alleys leading to the foot of the rocks crowned by the *Calvaire*, Napoleon suddenly drew up; acquainted the Duc de Frioul that he had a visit to make privately in the neighbourhood; and, having demanded the least frequented route to the village of Valvin, dismounted, and gave his horse to the aide-de-camp. Duroc, suspecting some intrigue of gallantry, involuntarily smiled as he offered his services as guide; and, having fastened his horse to a tree, and recommended, *en passant*, to the young Count Flahault, (whose looks be-

trayed no small curiosity concerning his Imperial Majesty's proceedings,) not to grow *too* impatient during their absence, he set off in the direction of the river, through one of those beautiful green alleys, entangled with juniper and broom, and overgrown by the greatest variety of wild flowers ever collected together in one of nature's uncultivated *parterres*,—which constitute a peculiar charm of the forests of Fontainebleau. Duroc, although admitted to the most familiar intimacy with the Emperor, was, of course, too good a courtier to hazard an inquiry touching the *object* of their route; while Napoleon, by his comments on the scenes they were traversing, and a learned discussion, into which he diverged, touching the new system of silvan-culture introduced by Violaines, for the regeneration of the Royal forests, was evidently anxious to evade all allusion to the subject.

"Yonder, Sire, is Valvin," said the Grand Marshal, as a few scattered cottages at length appeared at the end of an avenue of young plane-trees, beyond which glittered the blue waters of the Seine.

"Return, then, and wait me in the Forest," replied Napoleon hastily. "And should any one belonging to the Court come across you, be especially careful to give no indication of my destination."

And immediately, with a second smile, which ne tried to render as little significant as possible, Duroc, (who, on more than one previous occasion, had been the confidant of an Imperial, or Consular *amourette,)* returned towards the place of *rendez-vous*, leaving Napoleon to pursue his unmolested way, "*sous l'orme.*" The Grand Marshal's interest in the mystery might have been, perhaps, more strongly excited, had he seen the Emperor with his hat pulled over his face, to avoid recognition, trudge onward, till he reached the wicket of a large garden, surrounding the mansion known by the name of the Pavillon de Valvin, and notoriously inhabited by an English *détenu.*

"Is the General visible?" inquired he abruptly of the servants, who answered his hasty summons at the door bell;—and without waiting for a reply to his query, he entered the hall.

"Whom shall I announce?" demanded the amazed domestic.

"No matter,—a stranger!"—replied Napoleon, persuaded that his person was unknown to his conductor. And following him closely, they entered together a small saloon overlooking the garden; and, as Napoleon concluded, the presence of General R——.

But he was mistaken. There was no General —no *man* in the room—to warrant the loud step and haughty countenance of the intruder; but

close beside the open window, and in an attitude of despair, sat Lady Emily; supporting on her shoulder the feeble head of the fairest creature on whom the hero of Marengo had ever looked. Her cheeks were colourless, indeed,—colourless as those of the dead; and her air so languid, that even her light brown ringlets seemed to hang in utter lifelessness round her face. But it was as it were the face of an angel! and so potent was the influence of her unearthly delicacy and loveliness, that even as the lawgiver of Israel put his shoes from off his feet, when he found the place whereon he was standing was holy ground —so, overcome by the purity of her aspect, did Napoleon lay aside the sternness of his demeanour.

The eyes of both mother and daughter were swollen with weeping; and Lady Emily, though evidently recognising the person of her visiter, made no effort to rise which could disturb the gentle sufferer, whose head rested on her bosom. Her whole heart, her whole soul was with her afflicted child! How different a scene from the tumultuous disorder prevailing round the deathbed of the Cardinal!

"I have a thousand excuses, madam, to offer," said the Emperor, in a subdued voice, advancing towards the window where they sat. "I had expected to find General R——."

"My husband has only just quitted the room," said Lady Emily, hesitating what title to assign to her unceremonious guest.

"In that case, allow me to seek him elsewhere. The presence of a stranger may be painful to the young lady, your daughter, whom I grieve to find so much more seriously indisposed than I had been led to anticipate."

"No!" faltered Miss R——, in a tremulous voice, overcoming at once her natural timidity and her horror of the name of Bonaparte, in the consciousness that the man before her was sole arbiter of the destinies of her family. "My father will be here immediately. Do not leave us."

Unaccountably touched by the feeble accents of the gentle voice which thus addressed him, Napoleon instantly accepted the seat, pointed out by Lady Emily with as dignified a gesture as if *he* were a prisoner in the land, and *she* its sovereign.

"My daughter is suffering from the results of severe agitation," said his high-bred hostess, in a hurried voice, as if eager to conciliate her visiter, previous to the General's arrival. "A recent event,—the arrest of an intimate friend—"

But the words were suspended on her lips; for at that moment, undisturbed in countenance, unexcited in demeanour, the cold-blooded General

R—— entered the apartment. Bonaparte rose, and advanced to meet him; and the salutations exchanged between them, were simply those of gentlemen and equals. Even when the Emperor reseated himself, uninvited, the British General did the same; thus tacitly expressing his intention to see, in the annointed of the Pope, a Sovereign still unrecognised by the Government of his own country.

"The object of my visit here, Sir," said Napoleon, his *hauteur* returning, as he foresaw this determination on the part of his host, "was to express my satisfaction that an officer—a brother soldier—should have escaped the snares laid for his honour by the deposed family of Bourbon; a circumstance which transpired this morning, in the seizure of certain papers belonging to a young traitor, who should bear a less noble name, or pursue a less ignoble line of conduct!"—

"You allude, of course, to Count Jules de la Roche Allier," replied the General, with a coolness amounting to irony. "But I am at a loss to understand in what manner *my* connexion with him can have become interesting to the existing Government of France."

"I allude," interrupted Napoleon, "to your refusal to become a party to a conspiracy planned by the traitors at Hartwell, and confided to the inter-

mediation of Count Jules de la Roche Allier; who has been arrested on other charges, by the vigilance of my Minister of Police."

"Count Jules de la Roche Allier an agent of the Bourbons—a spy in the land? Your Majesty has been cruelly and grossly deceived!" interrupted Emily, indifferent even to her father's displeasure at such a crisis.

"You are, indeed, in error, General Bonaparte," said R——, pertinaciously marking his dissent from the mode of address adopted by his daughter. "Whatever may be my ground of enmity against the young man, I believe him to be innocent of the madness imputed to him. Suffer me, meanwhile, to thank you"—a bitter sneer passed over his countenance as he spoke—"for believing a British soldier, at large on parole, to be incapable of plotting against the Government which has become the depository of his honour."

"And what, then, was he doing at Fontainebleau?" cried Napoleon, rising angrily from his seat, without even hearing the taunt of his ill-judging host. "It is true this young man was arrested on mere suspicion. But a false passport, his papers, your own letter?"—

"A *letter?*"——

"Desiring him to set foot in your house no more, and referring to his negotiations——"

"For the hand of my daughter. Know, sir——"

"A few words may suffice to explain this vexatious business," interrupted Lady Emily, trembling at the thought of the indiscretions into which her husband might be betrayed by his twofold aversion to the Emperor of France, and the adherents of its fallen kings. "The family of La Roche Allier having resided, during its period of emigration, in Edinburgh, was welcomed in the higher circles of that city with the deference due to the unfortunate. In the common course of hospitality, Count Jules was introduced to our house, formed an attachment to my daughter, and eventually made overtures for her hand——"

"Overtures peremptorily declined by her father," interupted the General; "by her father, who could not justify it to himself to bestow the inheritance of one of the most ancient families in Scotlund upon an alien, a foreigner, a man who neither spoke its language, nor——"

"Professed its creed! I understand your scruples, sir," said Bonaparte, whose looks ever and anon reverted, during the explanation, to the pure pale face of the young English girl,—so mild, so full of resignation, so different from the meretricious beauties of his own dissolute Court.

"Pardon me,—we are all alike of the Church of Rome," said the less petulant Lady Emily, willing to insinuate a word in extenuation of her daughter's preference.

"I must conclude, then, madam, that General R—— had personal reasons for declining the alliance of the house of Roche Allier?"

"It is enough that he saw fit to exercise the authority of a parent over his child," said the General, harshly. "Unwilling, however, to tax my daughter's submission by leaving her exposed to this presuming young man's assiduities, I prepared my family for a continental tour; and it was then that, while, under sanction of our international treaty, we traversed France, the arrest and detention of every British subject who had been rash enough to confide in the good faith of the Republic, consigned us prisoners to Verdun! *There*, separated from her home, her country, her friends, my daughter's health, already impaired by pulmonary attacks, has gradually declined; and though," he continued, struggling to assume a more cheerful tone, lest the admission of his forebodings should prove injurious to the invalid, "though I am assured by Miss R——'s medical attendants that the system we are trying at Fontainebleau will in a short time, complete her restoration——"

"No, father, no!" faltered Emily, involuntarily

interrupting him. "You do not so deceive yourself,—you cannot so deceive *me;* I am dying; yes, I know it. I am dying! Roche Allier's arrival here, (disguised, and at the risk of life and honour,) convinced me that my mother's letters had already conveyed to our friends in England the knowledge of my rapid decline; and that poor Jules was periling all, in hopes that the presence of one so dear might avail to suspend the fatal blow. But he came;—and my father interdicted our meeting—my father was still inexorable! And now, Jules is a prisoner—and *I* on the brink of the grave!"

There was a momentary silence; for the hollowness of Emily's voice conveyed a fearful confirmation of her assertions.

"But I have not been disobedient,—have I, father?" she resumed, perceiving some indication of emotion in her father's countenance. "I shall not bequeath you the memory of a rebellious child? From the day of receiving your commands, I have held no communication with him; and now all risk is over of thwarting your wishes. I shall see his face no more. I am dying!"

And again she bowed her head on the bosom of her afflicted mother who was no longer able to repress the tears with which she had been struggling.

"If you could suggest anything in my power

to alleviate your sufferings," said the Emperor, deeply touched, but too much habituated to the control of his feelings to evince any symptom of emotion; "if, consistently with my duty to the nation——" He hesitated. He felt that it was not for *him* to propose the liberation of an emigrant Royalist.

"You could do *much*," said Emily striving to speak more firmly. "You could release my father and mother from captivity. When I am gone, it would be a grievous thing for them to be fixed in France, in incessant contemplation of the grave of their only child. *Promise* me that you will release them,—that you will send them home to Scotland to their friends——"

"And Count Jules de la Roche Allier?" exclaimed Napoleon, sympathizing in her filial devotion.

"For *him* I have nothing to ask," said poor Emily. "He is innocent, and therefore you dare not injure him."

"Are you aware, madam, that his family is especially excluded from the Act of Grace conceded to the emigrants?—that he has brought a proscribed head within reach of the retributive justice of the French Government?" added the Emperor, willing to probe to the utmost the heroism of the courageous young girl.

"Release my father and mother," she faintly

reiterated, clasping her hands as she spoke. "I leave the rest to God."

"I am at liberty, then, to do my worst," said Napoleon; "since even his friends refuse to plead in his behalf."

"I would pledge my life and honour on the innocence of young Roche-Allier!" interrupted the General. "Of fraud or treachery he is incapable. His attachment to my daughter has alone brought him into his present predicament."

"Give her to him, then, and end it!" said Napoleon abruptly; having already seated himself at a writing table, to accomplish the petition of his interesting prisoner. "Return to England, Monsieur le Général, with your family, and relieve me from the presence of this rash young man, by carrying him with you as your son."

And while General R———hesitated whether to accept or reject the benefits thus cavalierly-conferred, the Emperor rose and presented two folded papers to the hands of Emily.

"Both of these are yours," said he, with one of those radiant smiles which sometimes brightened his sallow visage. "*One* of them regards your father, and one—your husband. So dutiful a daughter will make the best of wives."

"It is too late! Alas, alas! it is too late! Yet a few hours, and my heavenly father will receive me to his mercy!" faltered Emily, now

almost exhausted by the agitation of continual emotion. "Accept, however, the thanks of one about to be released from all earthly bondage, that you have imparted peace and consolation to her dying hours!"

And big tears rolled down the pale cheeks of the sufferer, as she extended her slender hand, as a parting token, towards the Emperor. Profoundly touched, he raised it to his lips; and ere General R——— recovered his self-possession sufficiently, to explain or remonstrate, Napoleon, after a respecful obeisance to Lady Emily, had quitted the room.

"She will not die," muttered the despotic Napoleon to himself, as he pushed his way back through the gathering twilight, towards the spot, in the Forest of Fontainebleau, where Duroc was in waiting. "She *must* not die! I will send Corvisart to her!" And with an impetuosity equal to that of Uncle Toby, when he *swore* that Le Fevre should live, the Emperor, as he strode along, crunched down, with his iron heel, the branches of the juniper and heather bushes that impeded his way. "All girls are apt to fancy they are dying when they are crossed in love. Besides the cold-blooded old fool will think better of it. Sacrifice such a girl as that to a whim —a prejudice? Why, even I could scarcely hold

out against that noble countenance, and that persuasive voice."

"Send the Duc d'Otrante hither," said his Majesty, when he entered his *cabinet de travail*, at the close of a state dinner, a few hours after his return to the palace. "So,—you are here, sir! Come to offer your apologies, I trust, for the blundering officiousness of your people in causing the arrest of Jules de la Roche-Allier, on such insufficient testimony? Another time I advise you to select fellows possessing eyes, ears, and some small portion of understanding!"

"Your Majesty having, I find, already despatched a courier to Bicêtre with orders for the Count's release, I may rather tender my apologies to *himself* on his arrival at Fontainebleau, to accompany his father-in-law to England, in pursuance of the engagements, Sire, into which your Majesty has deigned to enter, this afternoon, with the family at the Pavillon de Valvin."

"*Comment donc coquin?*" cried the Emperor, relaxing into a hearty laugh. "Are you already so well-informed? The lubberly lacquey, then, over whom I stumbled in the antechamber of the Pavillon, was——"

"Precisely one of those fellows without eyes or ears, whom your Majesty has commissioned me to discharge."

"*A la bonne heure, mon cher Duc!*" Since

the fellow was an eavesdropper, I am glad he was a rascal of our own. Let him be as discreet as he has shown himself expert, and he may claim promotion. Understand, however, that this Valvin transaction is not to transpire: I do not wish to have it said in the Faubourg St. Germain that I have been courting conciliation with the English Cabinet, by an act of magnanimity towards the daughter of one of its members. But what *féte* is there to morrow—what *veille* to night?"

"None, sire; neither *féte* nor *veille*."

"Do you mean to tell me that I do not hear the bells of the *Sainte Trinité?* What should they be ringing at this hour of the evening?"

"The passing bell, Sire, of the English General's daughter. The Curé of the *Sainte Trinité* was her director; and Corvisart has just returned with him from Valvin, with intelligence of the young lady's dissolution."

"Already!" ejaculated Napoleon, throwing himself into a chair. "Poor girl! Poor unhappy mother!"

"On the other hand, I have the satisfaction to acquaint your Majesty that Dr. Paulet announces the Cardinal Caprara to be out of danger."

"*Au diable le Cardinal,*" ejaculated Napoleon, with one of his fiercest looks. "I would have given twenty Cardinals for power to save the life of the daughter of the English *détenu!*"

LADY EVELYN SAVILE'S

THREE TRIALS.

LADY EVELYN SAVILE'S THREE TRIALS;

BEING AN

EXTRACT FROM THE DIARY OF MR. S. OF CHARLCOTE PARK.

Charlcote, May, 1827.—How well I recollect my poor mother assuring me, among her parting exhortations on my leaving her for Christchurch, that unless I exerted myself to subdue the wayward and sensitive irritability of my character, I should live to become the most miserable of human beings, and to alienate the regard of all my friends. I should not have endured such an accusation from any one but herself; but a presentiment at that very moment warned me she was in the right, and experience is beginning to confirm the lesson.

Why—why can I not be satisfied with the events of life as I find them,—with the feelings I excite and see excited, without examining too cu-

riously into their nature and origin?—Why should I care for aught beyond the surface of things in this most superficial world?—Because my spirit is endued with a tone of refinement, and my bosom nerved to a degree of morbid sensibility, which is at once the most exquisite and the most painful inheritance of nature.

The thrill of ecstacy derived from the spectacle of a noble landscape,—from the attunement of a fine anthem pealing among the arches of an ancient cathedral, or the still more delicious music of a generous sentiment uttered by lips which are dear to us,—from an atmosphere laden with the fragrance of summer,—from a beautiful countenance or graceful figure,—is, after all, a poor compensation for the impatience arising from the every-day monotony of life; for the disappointment of baffled affections, and the irritating doubts of an insatiable attachment.

Have I a right to be thus discontented?—Rich as I am in all those tangible gifts of Providence which limit the ambition of ordinary men, have I an excuse for murmuring?—Could I, with all my selfish indolence, have braved a life of hardship, or endured a compulsory association with the low-minded and the mercenary?—Well, well,—after all I believe I *have* some reason to congratulate myself on the possession of Charlcote, with its park and forest,—its library and picture-gallery,

its conservatories and fountains: and above all, with its rent-roll, and the ancient and honourable name which renders these things my own.

And yet—fool that I am!—it was the extent of these very possessions which first moved my misgivings, and prompted my ungenerous doubts of the motives and characters of other people. My old guardian, Sir Horace Savile, even before I quitted Eton, was perpetually reminding me that a man —and still more,—a *boy*—with an estate of forty thousand a year, is predestined to the snares of designing companions; and took care that every book he placed in my hands should confirm the precept.

Would to heaven he had left me to become a dupe! What would have been the sacrifice of half my fortune, compared with the jealous caution and anxiety he succeeded in instilling into my mind? Companion after companion, associate after associate, was I tempted to dismiss from my regard, under an apprehension that my horses and hounds, my equipages and preserves, and comfortable quarters at Charlcote, formed the secret inducement of their predilection for my society; and boyhood which, with all its guileless impulses and ready adoption of the pleasures and follies of the hour, is usually a season of so much spontaneous enjoyment, was to *me* embittered by a premature mistrust of myself and those by

whom I was surrounded, such as pertains of right to the callous epoch of middle age.

But, alas! what were these sacrifices,—what was my reserve towards my fox-hunting companions and Oxford friends,—compared with the vexatious alarms I was soon to derive from the still more wary admonitions of my poor mother? Little did she suspect, when I parted from her at Charlcote to pass my first season in town a few months previous to her own decease, how fatally her counsels were calculated to embitter my future destiny; while *she* thought only of unveiling to my knowledge the artifices of her sex, and warning me against the sordid ambition actuating the conduct of half the women in the world —or rather *of* the world! Experience would have taught me such wisdom soon enough; and in a manner which, while it disgusted me with the sordid egotism of a single object, might have left me free to hope that there still existed pure and gentle hearts to be wooed,—frank and honourable hands to be won.

As it was, arriving in London with a prepossession that every mother at Almack's was on the watch to entangle the young owner of Charlcote and its thousands for some daughter or niece educated and brought out for the express purpose of forming a good establishment and strengthening

the family interest, I taught myself to overlook the charms even of the loveliest face, and to despise the fascinations of some of the most high-minded women in England. I was convinced, for instance, that Lady Mary Blair, the sister of one of my chosen Oxford friends, was exerting all the arts of coquetry to make Charlcote Park her own; when as I afterwards discovered, she had been for many years betrothed to an absent cousin: and during a whole season I amused myself with tantalizing the expectations and exciting the hopes of pretty little Charlotte Howard by a violent flirtation, with the idea of driving her to despair by the eventual disappointment of her speculation, without once suspecting that she was using *me* as a mere screen to disguise from her family her attachment and engagement to poor Charles Rawdon, of the guards.

It was however this very mistrust of the manœuvres to which I was exposed, that carried me to the feet of my dear Evelyn. The world was pleased to assert, with its ordinary liberality, that my addresses to Lady Rydal's daughter were prompted by the ambition of allying myself with the premier earl of the kingdom; but my real inducements, although scarcely less selfish, were of a very different nature.

I knew that Evelyn, educated in all the gor-

geous splendours of Castle Rydal, was unconscious of any other mode of existence than the brilliant profusion of her father's house; that her total ignorance of the world and its ways confirmed the natural disinterestedness of her character; and the very pride which might have been expected to deter me from an alliance far above my own degree, was in fact the original motive of my attachment to the young and lovely Lady Evelyn Beaufort. What were to her the caskets and settlements I had it in my power to offer?—A mansion, a thousand-fold more magnificently appointed than mine,—diamonds a thousand times more precious than those of the Savile family, had been glittering in her eyes from infancy; and I knew and felt with a most bewildering throb of triumph when first I pressed her to my bosom, that the concession was bestowed upon Edward Savile for his own and single sake,—not upon the proprietor of Charlcote.

Another point, too, was strong in confirmation of the involuntary and fervent nature of Evelyn's affections. She loved me not only in spite of herself, but in spite of her parents; she, who had been from her birth the most submissive of children, ventured to brave and finally succeeded in overcoming Lady Rydal's reluctance to the match. Who—who could have withstood the tears of Evelyn? Even her authoritative mother found them

irresistible; and while the voice of society accused Lady Rydal of withholding her consent from her daughter's marriage "with a commoner," that daughter honestly confided to me that my own jealousy of temper and waywardness of character were the true source of the disapprobation of her family.

They are mistaken, I can assure these Beauforts, if they fancy that *their* opposition is likely to school me into a more gentle frame of mind.

And yet I do not think I have given poor Evelyn *much* cause to regret the consent which her persevering attachment wrung from her parents: comparing myself with the generality of husbands, I cannot fancy that I have displayed *much* perverseness of temper or inattention to her wishes.

From the day I first beheld her taming down the sportive vivacity of her footsteps to the sober pace of the stately countess among the shrubberies of Rydal Castle, I registered a vow within my heart that I would render her future life an uninterrupted tissue of prosperity and joy;—that I would make her the envy of the worldand the glory of my own existence,—and I trust I have fulfilled the promise.—I ask only in return,—is it too much?—an unqualified feeling of acknowledgment that her happiness is derived from me, and me only; and a degree of tenderness which would induce her to abandon all things,—home, country,

parents, friends, associates—for the sake of her husband.

Such is the law of God in the institution of wedlock—such should be the law of man!—But although I may congratulate myself on having attained this paramount influence over her feelings, it sometimes occurs to me that Lady Evelyn is less cheerful and unconstrained in my presence than she used to be; and that although her will is a law at Charlcote, where my hourly efforts are devoted to the forestalment of her wishes, she is occasionally tempted to regret its distance from Castle Rydal. What can she find to like in that grim, obscure old place?—What has it to offer in comparison with the modern elegance and luxurious refinement of her own abode?—Does she miss the noisy round of country hospitality in which Lord R. delights to take refuge from the nothingness of his own mind?—or is it—*can* it be—that she pines after the soothing idolatry of her doting mother?

Let me strive to recall the occasion on which I first noted an expression of sadness on her countenance. Yes! it was on our wedding-day!—that sweetest holiday,—that brightest respite from the cares of life,—which ought to be unclouded as the luxurious sky of an eastern climate—unruffled as the glassy waves which sleep beneath.

I had prepared for that morning a surprise which I expected would excite the eager delight and gratitude of my Evelyn. She had often asked me for my picture; and I, with my accustomed contrariety, had as often affected to decline the task of sitting for a portrait, although a celebrated artist was at that very moment engaged in the accomplishment of her request. Day after day I had seen her turn with indifference from the strings of pearls and sparkling gems collected by my ostentatious vanity as marriage gifts, and already I luxuriated in an anticipation of the rapture with which my last and simplest offering would be welcomed; when, half an hour previous to the ceremony which was to make her mine for ever, I sent to demand a private interview. How angrily did my heart recoil from the common place worldliness of the reply!—"Lady Rydal's compliments, and Lady Evelyn Beaufort was engaged with the hair-dresser." I could have crushed the fellow who delivered the message; and was half inclined to jump into my travelling carriage and quit Castle Rydal for ever. I contented myself, however, with whispering to my beautiful bride when I led her into the castle chapel, "And can you venture, Evelyn, to pronounce a solemn marriage vow in the presence of God and man, after the frivolous manner in which you have prepared yourself for so sacred an

institution? Had you *really* loved me, you would have been contented to approach this altar with tresses less trimly arrayed, rather than wound the heart of your future husband by such untimely levity."

Even amidst the tears which burst from her eyes, and the sighs which escaped her lips, I could distinguish the words, "Forgive me, Edward!—it was my mother!" And I *did* forgive her;—but I could not so easily pardon myself when, on seeking her to press our departure for Charlcote an hour or two after the ceremony, I found her in the favourite boudoir of her beloved home,—her hair dishevelled, her crown of snow white roses cast upon the ground, and tears streaming from her eyes.

No, no!—there should not have been a tear on Evelyn's cheek upon her wedding day; it should have been bright as the dawning of summer sunshine! And as we passed the lodge gates of Charlcote on our entrance into her new residence, I whispered in my turn, "Forgive *me*, dearest,—forgive my petulance this morning!"

"I do, I do!" she faltered, taking the miniature from her bosom, as if it offered an apology for all my faults; "but remember, love, this has been *your Evelyn's first trial.*"

Charlcote, January, 1829.—How strange that

I cannot get a single order attended to in my own house. There are bonfires enough blazing yonder on the Wrottesmore Hills to bring all the country hither with their fulsome congratulations; and yet it is full an hour since I despatched a messenger on horseback to stop the ringing of the bells in the village. I have no doubt the blockheads are fully aware of my vexation at finding my hopes frustrated, and are triumphing in an opportunity of insulting me. But thank Heaven! though Charlcote has lost its heir, my Evelyn still lives—my poor, patient, tender, suffering Evelyn! —thank Heaven, I have yet years in store which will enable me to atone for my rash harshness towards her.

That a few short hours should have sufficed to crush the precious expectations I have so long, so vainly cherished! It is all Lady Rydal's doing. Had she not interfered with her officious parade of maternal solicitude, I should certainly have attended to Evelyn's suggestions; but I have no idea of being hectored into submission on any point of domestic arrangement, either by Lord Rydal or his consequential countess. I fancied, too, that from the first they evinced an unreasonable and groundless disinclination to my standing for the county. Was it *their* affair if I chose to expend fifteen or twenty thousand pounds on the acquirement of a distinction which has become

almost hereditary in the Savile family? The interests of their daughter and her unborn child could not be materially affected by such a trifle; and in allying myself with the Beaufort family, I never covenanted to subject either my financial projects or my political principles to their authority. What, too, could be more natural than that I should desire my lovely, my sympathising Evelyn to witness and adorn my triumph?—How worthless and importunate would have been the plaudits of the multitude, or the gratulations of cordial friends, had I not been certain that they reached *her* ear!

Lady Rydal, with her old woman's tales of fatigue and agitation, and the delicacy of her daughter's constitution, only moved my impatience; and when I replied to Evelyn's own confessions of alarm, that I should consider her absence on such an occasion a proof of the decline of her affection for her husband, I spoke with a sincere conviction that their terrors originated in the mere nervous susceptibility of fine ladyism.

Still it was the duty of that accursed coachman to forewarn me how imperfectly broken was the new set of horses sent down for the occasion by my inconsiderate friend Lord Blair. He *must* have been aware that they were totally unfit to stand the tumult of an election riot,—the flags, and streamers, and drums, and all the other in-

tolerable nuisances attendant on such an occasion. I own I entertained not the slightest apprehension; and although on passing the carriage on our progress to the hustings, I noticed that Lady Evelyn amid all her smiles looked deadly pale, I attributed her emotion to the over-excitement of her sympathy in my success. Great God!—shall I ever forget the tumult of my feelings, when a messenger first contrived to render himself audible to my ear through the uproar of the scene, in order to acquaint me that the Charlcote carriage had been seen dashing at full speed along the High Street, and that an accident was apprehended! It was full a quarter of an hour before the intelligence reached me; another had nearly expired before I could disentangle myself from the mob, and obtain a horse. I beheld nothing—I heard nothing till I reached the outskirts of the town; but when at length I *did* attain the private road leading towards Charlcote Park, I distinctly saw the bank broken down by the violence with which the carriage had been dragged along by the infuriated horses. Agonised by the spectacle, I put mine to its full speed; till three miles further on I was stopped by an importunate tenant, who pointed out to me the spot where my coachman had been thrown from the box, and a neighbouring cottage where *his body* was lying.

"And the carriage—Lady Evelyn?"

"The carriage kept the road towards the hall: we have heard nothing yet of my lady."

I galloped on—I reached the lodge—I saw the broken carriage lying against the iron gates,—Again I breathed the name of my wife.

"Her ladyship had been carried up insensible to the hall."

Never did the park I had to traverse appear so extensive to me before; but when at last I came in sight of the house, and obtained a full view of Evelyn's chamber-windows, it seemed to my impatient bosom that the least consideration for my feelings would have induced Lady Rydal, or one of the family, to exhibit some ostensible token of the state of things,—of the life or death of all that was dearest to me in existence. As if any one had leisure to think of *me* at all in such a crisis!—unless, indeed, as the perverse author of the evil which had befallen.

A single question burst from my lips, when the house-steward, with a face as pale as ashes, met me in the vestibule—"*Was she alive?*"

"Her ladyship is still living, sir; but——"

I heard no more,—the shock was too much for me;—and on recovering my consciousness I found myself seated in a hall chair beside the window, surrounded by a herd of wondering servants; and had scarcely sufficient strength to support myself up the great staircase, and crawl along the corridor

leading to Evelyn's apartments. A dim light was admitted into my wife's chamber, and a low moan of pain was the first sound which struck me as I entered: but that light was sufficient to show me the touching smile which overspread her ghastly countenance on beholding me, and that mournful tone of anguish proceeded at least from the lips of my living wife.

I drew nearer to her bedside, and saw that she was surrounded by strange faces; that, extended on the coverlid, beside her swollen arm which had been broken and mangled in the recent accident, lay the body of a dead infant, which she was caressing; and as I stooped over her, and mingled my tears with the damp dews that hung on her discoloured brow, she whispered, "He would have been the image of my dear Edward—the lips, the forehead, are exactly like your own;—but I must not talk—I must not exhaust myself. Remember, dearest, this is *your Evelyn's second trial!*"

February, 1829.—Surely there never was any thing so tediously protracted as Lady Evelyn's recovery; surely so much caution and seclusion is neither customary nor necessary on such occasions. I am convinced Lady Rydal has managed the affair so as to prolong all the mischief of the case before my eyes, and afford me what she considers a useful lesson. Not an annoyance

nor a mortification has she spared me;—one day exhibiting letters of condolence from an intended royal sponsor;—another, ostentatiously laying aside some of the splendid preparations for this unfortunate babe; and at all hours and seasons lamenting over its loss as if it were the first and last of her family. She says she *had* hoped to look upon a child of her darling Evelyn's previous to her own decease,—but that it is now too late; and although *I* can see no symptoms of disease or decay about this tiresome pragmatical old woman, I own the thoughts of possessing my dear Evelyn beyond all further reach of her mother's interference and influence would have afforded an additional joy to the birth of our child. But the triumph of proving me to have been in the wrong, and of finding her prognostications fulfilled, will doubtless suffice to recover Lady Rydal from all her imaginary ailments.

It is now six weeks since the unfortunate occurrence, and she has enjoyed the luxury of sullen resentment ever since. This is the day we had set apart for the christening of our firstborn; and it was to have been solemnized by prodigious rejoicings among the tenantry, and by the opening of two school-houses erected under Evelyn's auspices in the village. Of this latter part of the ceremony it would have been impossible to defraud the horde of wondering widemouthed savages of

the liberties of Charlcote :—were half my family exterminated, they would still think it high treason against their rights that a few score of their ragged urchins should be compelled to rehearse their alphabets and catechisms for another half year in the old cottages. But if Evelyn possessed a particle of that warm sensibility for which I formerly gave her credit, she would not have selfishly left me to go through this odious ceremonial alone. She must have been fully aware of the exaggerated regrets and sympathy which would be poured upon me on such an occasion, and which her presence would have sufficed to silence.

I went among these blockheads to perform an act of munificence towards them positively with the air of a culprit; and all because Lady Rydal thought proper to assert that the damp air of one of the finest spring mornings that ever shone would prove too much for her daughter!—There is such a parade of sensibility and solicitude between them!—Evelyn is perpetually desponding over the declining state of her mother's health; and I am scarcely ever left for half an hour alone with Lady Rydal, that she does not take occasion to beseech I will watch carefully over my wife after her departure; and to predict that, without the most vigilant at-

tention, Evelyn will fall a sacrifice to the consequences of this disastrous affair. Was ever any thing more absurd! One would think, as old Lord Lindsay says in "The Abbot," that "women's flesh were grown as tender as new-fallen snow."

I fancy, however, I have at last discovered a method of silencing the old raven's forebodings. Yesterday morning as Lady Evelyn was slowly approaching us through the conservatory, pausing to take breath at every step, (and had not that *exigeante* Lady Rydal been sitting near me in the saloon how eagerly should I have rushed forward to tender her the support of my arm!) Lady R. thought proper to whisper the thrice-told tale of her maternal alarms lest my wife should never wholly recover her youthful strength and spirits; hinting that there was a pulmonary affection hereditary in the Beaufort family.

"Does your ladyship really apprehend any thing of hectic symptoms?" I inquired. "In that case I shall give up my seat in the House without a moment's hesitation. Italy is our only resource; and we should lose no time in setting off, that we may avoid the inconvenience of travelling during the summer heats."

I shall never forget the shudder with which Lady Rydal recoiled from me at this unexpected

announcement. "No!" she replied, in a concentrated whisper, "you could not be so inhuman; —*even you* could not be so inhuman as to separate an only child from a dying parent! My physicians have acknowledged to me, Mr. Savile, that I have not six months to live. Do not render my last moments desolate;—do not provoke on her death-bed the malediction of a bereaved mother!"

Lady Evelyn's entrance put a period to the conversation; and I trust I have also terminated Lady Rydal's groundless predictions: but I may yet find occasion to make her atone for those insolent words, "*even you* could not be so inhuman!"

July, 1829.—How delightful to date my diary once more from Charlcote;—to find myself once more in my own old familiar home; to look up to its towering oaks and massive chesnuts, and remember the day-dreams which I first learnt to cherish beneath their deep and impressive shade! *Here*, too, she is mine again!—The world cannot reach her here;—society cannot surround her with its contaminating whispers, nor that endless tribe of haughty Beauforts intrude their importunate claims on her time and regard. Here I shall have her for my own. We shall ride, walk, read, converse in the same solitary union which blest the first months of our marriage. Evelyn will sing to me,

listen to me, chide me, love me, with all the intensity of her early affection !—What a summer of joy and enjoyment is before me!

During the tedious season we have been passing in town how little have I seen of my wife! Lady Rydal's real or fancied indisposition has been the means of drawing her daughter incessantly from home; and whenever she could be released from her attendance on her mother, there were drawing-rooms to be attended, or family connexions to be kept up by formal hecatombs of hospitality, or some high mightiness of the tribe to be propitiated by the endurance of a stupid concert or ball. But Heaven be thanked it is over. We can now live exclusively for ourselves, or rather for each other;—we can now exist as if the world were but a name. And such should ever be the destiny of *love*. Less than all is nothing to its insatiable exactions. For my own part, I recognise no gradation in its impulses between the intense and absorbing ardour of passion, and the coldest torpor of indifference. I feel myself capable of passing from the utmost bigotry of religion, the holiest inspirations of a martyr, to the darkness of atheism:—I know no medium in such things.—

An express from Castle Rydal! Is it not too irritating? Must I resign all my precious schemes of happiness in favour of the caprices of that fan-

tastical old woman? I see how it is—they will positively drive me from England, that I may enjoy Lady Evelyn's society unmolested. Is it not written that a woman shall leave father and mother and cleave to her husband?—and must my own hearth be deserted, and my own feelings set at nought, every time Lady Rydal's finger chooses to ache?—Yes, she shall go: on this occasion, and for the last time, I will overcome my own wishes: but I warn them that our return to Charlcote shall only be the signal for Evelyn's departure for Italy.

Beauvais, September 4th.—Thank Heaven, I am at last released from the house of bondage!—thank Heaven, my own efforts have at length unclasped the embrace of that clinging Old Man of the Sea! —I really began to fear that I had promised myself too much in undertaking our departure; but perseverance—ay, or obstinacy, or obduracy, or whatever Lady Rydal pleases to call it—has effected my purpose. And now the Garden of Eden lies before us; and more than all the happiness and triumph I ever anticipated in the confiding union of domestic life will be mine, while I devote myself to guiding my beloved Evelyn through the noble scenery of Italy—that labyrinth teeming with the treasures of art which enraptured me even when I wandered amid its fascinations in all the uncompanionable dreariness of my earlier

years: — there she will insensibly recover her health, her animation, her tenderness towards that husband who swears to devote his every thought and every moment to the task of aiding her recovery. No! she shall have no occasion to regret those endearing solicitudes of Lady Rydal's which she has taught herself to prize so highly.

I can scarcely fancy we are within a day's journey of Paris. Never did I approach that city before without feeling, and observing in my companions, a degree of excitement and exhilaration such as the vicinity of no other spot, no other city, is capable of affording; and now I not only perceive that Evelyn is oppressed by the prospect of mingling in its giddy scenes, but, were it not that I have so determinately formed my plans for introducing her to all its beauties and diversions, I could myself be well content to pass on at once to the South. Perhaps it is that my spirits were over harassed by all the scenes I had to endure at Castle Rydal—all Lord R's remonstrances and hypocritical allusions to the desolation which would fall on his gray hairs on the approaching loss of his wife and during the absence of his child. I scarcely ever heard persons advanced in years allude to their own "gray hairs," unless for some cajoling purpose; and as to Lady R.'s danger, I am convinced she indulges in all sorts of exaggerations for the sole purpose of proving to the world

how insensible I have shown myself to her distress, and to the feelings of Lady Evelyn. But the struggle is now over!—I can hold my wife to my bosom in unwatched and unmolested affection; and her mother, deprived of all motive for further dissembling, will gradually recover, and persuade her fashionable toady of a physician to reverse the fatal decree she had bespoken for herself.

Lausanne, October.—It is very strange,—but the nearer we approach the South, the more Lady Evelyn's debility increases. She takes no interest in the new objects which force themselves on her attention; and although, in answer to the allusions by which I strive to attract her notice and divert her from her silent reflections, she labours to appear more cheerful, and occasionally utters some constrained inquiry, it is evident that her thoughts are far away. On arriving in any new town or city, her first question is concerning the English post.

I wish she would learn to dress her artificial smiles with somewhat of a less melancholy expression;—she *must* be aware that at present they convey daggers to my bosom. Such, however, is the perversity of woman's nature, even in the exercise of her best affections! It is not that she fractiously or unnecessarily complains—let me do her justice—but that in those involuntary bursts of tenderness which once rendered our exclusive

companionship so enchanting to my soul, she no longer attempts to disguise her conviction that our union is drawing to a close. Last night, on returning from a dinner party at the villa of her cousin, Lord B., which she had excused herself from attending on the plea of indisposition, I found the saloon deserted, and stole softly into Evelyn's room, believing that she had retired to rest; but I found her seated beside the window with the curtains drawn aside and her eyes fixed in eager contemplation on the clear depths of the starry autumnal sky.

"I am trying to interpret yonder omens," she whispered, while I pressed my lips gently to her cheek. "I am trying to decypher in their mysterious aspect whether it is appointed to me to become an orphan—whether my dear mother will pass before me into the sanctuary."

"And your husband, Evelyn," I exclaimed, interrupting her; "has he no claims on your consideration, that you indulge in this unreasonable depression?"

"Hush!" she faltered, laying her delicate hand on my lips; "this is too sacred an hour for chiding. I tell you, dearest Edward, that my doom is sealed. I feel it—I know it. Nothing is left for me but the grave—and, alas! a *foreign grave!* I shall not lie in the tomb of my fathers; I shall not rest where my beloved, and those he will in

future learn to love, repose together in the dust. Alone—desolate—forgotten—the withered leaves of a strange country will come fluttering down on the turf that covers the broken heart of Evelyn."

There is something in her countenance at all seasons, but more especially when she indulges in these wild bursts of emotion, so bright beyond all human expression, so irradiated with the impulse of an immortal nature, that the harsh words of reproof I premeditate often become silenced on my lips as I gaze upon her face: yet on this occasion I ventured to reproach her with want of generosity towards me, even while she concealed her face in my bosom, with the tears of her ill-requited tenderness stealing down her cheeks.

"Trust me," she murmured between her broken sobs, "trust me, dearest, these warnings are not spoken in bitterness. I wish but to say a few words— a *very* few words—which may linger in your memory when I shall be at rest. Edward—my own Edward!—when you shall wed again, and *that* time in spite of your incredulity will surely come, let it not be with the child of living parents —with the idol of a numerous family. Let your future wife be one who has experienced no domestic happiness such as you can suppose her capable of comparing with that you are inclined to bestow; and sometimes,—sometimes amid the

transports of this new passion, think upon your poor lost Evelyn—upon her early faith, her early death—think upon her counsels, Edward, and do justice to the truth and tenderness of her love!"

My heart was too full to admit of my uttering more than a few incoherent sentences in reply; and probably they appeared harsher than I could have wished,—for I was apprehensive that by giving way to my feelings I might afford a confirmation of her presentiments.

Lausanne, 19th.—The physicians strenuously recommended that Lady Evelyn should pass the winter at Naples, while *she* is as obstinately bent on remaining here. Her connexion with the family of Lord B., whose brother has recently been appointed ambassador at Paris, ensures her a more constant communication with England than she could command elsewhere. It appears that poor Lady Rydal is about to undergo an operation of some danger; and her daughter is ill prepared to endure at such a crisis the delays and uncertainties attendant on all foreign correspondence.

Yesterday, when she found that I had already set on foot the preparations for departure, she threw herself into my arms, and implored me to delay our journey towards Naples. "Do not, do not take me hence!" she exclaimed, with convulsive anguish. "Believe me, I shall not much longer tax your patience. A few days—a week—a

fortnight at furthest, will bring me the intelligence of my poor mother's safety or release. Should she recover this terrible effort, trust me your Evelyn will require no southern climate to expedite her recovery: should she *perish*, do not condemn me to encounter *my third trial* among aliens and strangers. No! do not compel me to quit Lausanne."

I cannot however sacrifice the precious health of my wife, perhaps her very life, to such idle presentiments. The English physicians assure me I have not a day to lose; but I will suffer her to accuse me of caprice and unkindness rather than give her the slightest reason to suspect the truth.

Domo d'Ossola.—Again, and for the thousandth time, I recognise the impotency of human wishes, —the vanity of earthly prospects. Instead of enjoying side by side with the object of my idolatry, the glorious scenery amidst which we have been loitering, I rejoice only that the Simplon is passed, and that we have proceeded thus far in safety. Standing once more upon the threshold of Italy, I begin to miss the charm with which I once found it invested; and the atmosphere positively affects me with a more baneful charm than even that of Castle Rydal.

There is a feeling of oppression in the air, and a degree of languid torpor in my own frame, as if

the Genius of Misfortune were wandering abroad to menace or destroy; and although I sometimes express my displeasure at Evelyn's ill-concealed despondency, I own I am beginning to acknowledge a similar influence. In a few days we shall be among the lakes which in times of old excited such pleasurable emotions in my bosom; and before I quitted Paris I promised Sommariva to pass a day or two with Evelyn at Isola Bella. If any local influence can dissolve the fatal spell enwoven round our journey, it will be the aspect of that enchanting spot.

Isola Bella, October 26th.—Yes! here indeed we find that balminess of nature which Milton assures us is

"Able to cure all sadness but despair."

Never did I behold a scene so exquisite, never inhale an atmosphere so musky with the fragrance of the departing summer, as that which greeted us on reaching the island this morning. Yonder mountains maintain their rugged dignity as if in contrast to the ornate and luxurious cultivation of the oasis lying at their feet:—the nearer hills,—clothed with mournful olive groves relieving the bright foliage of the chesnut, the mulberry, and the wandering vines which unite them into a bower of verdure,—are enlivened by the spires of count-

less villages;—while the lake reflects as on a crystal mirror the skiffs which traffic between the Toccia, the Tesino, and its beautiful shores.

But who can describe the charm of our approach to Isola Madre—with its palm-trees extending their mysterious foliage as if to invite us towards a refuge from the fervour of the autumnal sun,—its exotics flinging up their masses of blossom from amid the fissures of the rocks into the brightness of day, and seeming to exult in the consciousness of beauty?—Drawing aside the awning of our boat, that Lady Evelyn might enjoy with me the aspect of the unruffled lake and the bright Borromean gems which seem to float upon its surface, I pointed out to her admiration the clear deep blue of the heavens, and felt satisfied that even her depression of spirit must give way to joyful emotions at such an hour in such a spot. But instead of replying to my enthusiasm, she extended her pale thin hand towards a single cloud,—a solitary dark speck on the verge of the horizon.——

"This is mere waywardness,—" I began in an angry voice, while, with a mournful smile, she motioned me to silence.

"I love the sunshine," she faltered, "for it is for my beloved;—I welcome the cloud, for it is for Evelyn."

"Is this a scene for discontent?" I exclaimed;

"think you that affliction can find its way to a seclusion so bright as this?"

"Yet even here," she replied, "must your Evelyn encounter her third trial—her last." I turned away, I would no longer listen to her peevish forebodings.—

27th.—Do I live to write it?—Yes! it is fitting that such records should not pass away.—Let me subdue the anguish of my heart till all is told,—and then—no matter!

We stood—*we*—O word of agony, which I must breathe no more!—on the marble terrace of the villa, watching the vessels as they wandered like living things upon its waves. She leant heavily on my arm—she raised her head to my shoulder—she pointed out to me an approaching boat apparently steered by the peasants of the country.—

"It bears my destiny!" she murmured. "I can discern Lord B.'s confidential servant seated in the stern. He promised to forward to me at this place the first letters that might arrive from England. Edward, Edward,—he would not have despatched that man, had not the news been fatal!—All is over!"

I prayed her to be calm, but her agitation increased as the fellucca approached the landing-place. For a moment she became rigid and motionless as marble in my arms,—while the steward

of Lord B., stepping from the boat, placed a letter in my hands.—It was sealed with black!—In another moment I was covered with the life's blood of my Evelyn;—and that throbbing heart was at peace!

And now she is mine again—mine only and for ever!—O what a refuge is the grave! * * *

LA TARANTATA.

LA TARANTATA.

"WHAT'S in the wind with you now, mother?—you look as black as a thunder-cloud," cried young Madeo; son and (as far as heirship might be) heir to Gioacchino, a thriving fisherman of Cotracastro, a small town of Calabria; as a stout middle-aged dame, of comely features, but bronzed into the complexion of a Chickasaw Indian, threw down, on the beach beside him, a bundle of nets, on the reparation of which she had been exercising her industry. "Has any one affronted you?—any neighbour dared to wag head, tongue, or finger at you? Name him, and remember that your son has a heart and wears a stiletto."

"I am not apt to be a quarreller with my neighbours," replied Anetta, more calmly than might have been anticipated from the fierce glance of her coal-black and coal-bright eyes. "And when I *do* involve myself in a brawl, it will not be for the purpose of bringing blood upon the head of

my son. I must sadly need an avenger, *Madeo mio,* before I call on a stripling such as you, and one, moreover, so near my heart, to venture battle in my behalf; more especially, if, as now, your father were the aggressor."

"My father? What has the old gentleman been doing to anger you? Cracking a bottle too many with his merry mates?—or skipping his Whitsuntide offerings to the shrine of San Gennaro?—or chucking some pretty maiden under the chin?—or"—

"Spare your conjectures, lad!" said his mother, resting her swarthy hands upon the haunches which lent so remarkable an extension to her plaited petticoat of scarlet woolsey; "or, by wasting your time, which is *his,* you may chance to come in for your share of the churlishness that has so much vexed me."

"Oho! there has been a breeze, then, blowing at home?"

The good lady nodded assent.

"My father has been letting off a broadside at you? Well, do him justice! 'T is not often, mother, he finds fault with you."

"Not often he finds fault with *me!*" exclaimed Anetta. "Truly, no; but as often, I take it, as there is fault to be found! If every good wife in Cotracastro were to"—

"I know it mother—who knows it better?" re-

plied her dutiful offspring, readily anticipating the well-known personal vaunt that was to follow. "You are the pearl of wives and parents. But, if not upon yourself, on whom has the old gentleman been venting his cross-grainedness?"

"On whom but your sister?" cried Monna Anetta, thus nailed to a distinct reply. "Yonder sits my poor Malfina in a shady corner, at home, with her two eyes swelled out of her head—even as I found her this morning when I returned from market; her father having taken advantage of my absence (while I was haggling and haggling to obtain a few *piccoli* more for his stale mullets,) to threaten my poor girl as never she was threatened in her life; just because she chooses to remain true to a lover who was once of his own choosing, instead of accepting the fat boor, Beppo, the grazier, for her husband, who would fain take her up the country to his farm in the marshes, away from kith and kin, to spend her days in brewing pumpkin-soup for his dinner, or making buffalo-milk cheeses for his dairy."

"Beppo is a warm man," replied the young fisherman gravely. "My father's supper is not the worse served for all the fat turkeys and sacks of millet which he has heaped upon us since he took it into his head to ask for little Malfina to be his wife."

"Glutton!" ejaculated the fishwife, setting her

arms more akimbo than before, "would you barter your sister for a mess of pottage?"

"But, so far as my opinion may weigh in the family," continued Madeo, without seeming to notice the interruption, "if my pretty Malfinetta were to make up her mind to forget Carlo, and give her hand to the grazier"—

"Well?" cried Anetta impatiently, as her son paused for a moment, seemingly absorbed in consideration of the mended nets—"*Well?*"—

—"Why, she might go dwindle into her grave, ague-stricken, at Beppo's marsh-farm, before I would once demean myself to say 'Sister, how goes it?' or 'There blows a purer breeze at Cotracastro—Malfina, come home again, and youth and health will be restored you!"

"That's my own Madeo—that's my lion-hearted boy!" cried the Calabrian Nereid, seizing his shoulders and bestowing a hearty kiss on his sunburned forehead. "The blessed Madonna knows I would rather have my girl feed at a decen man's board, than herd with a vagrant under a bush among the mountains; but not at the cost of a broken troth-plight, and, it may be, a broken heart; for Malfina's heart, Madeo, my darling, would be far easier to break than yours or mine."

"Yours?" exclaimed the boy, with a sapient nod. "Yours, mother, I take it, is natured somewhat after the fashion of the lava that flows from

our old mountain yonder at Naples: it may be hard now, or seem so; but, if father's word is to be trusted, 't was soft enough when he was the stripling that I am now."

"Foolery—mere idle foolery of the silly old man's!" exclaimed Anetta, with half a frown and half a smile. "But *my* heart is not the question. 'T was of my girl we were speaking; and I would fain say, as I have often said before, that, since t' was your father's doing to suffer Malfina and Carlo so much and so kindly together when they were neighbours' children, and his father Benettone still possessed his vineyards and his farm, 't was a hard thing to drive the poor lad from our threshold the moment trouble fell upon the family; without waiting to see what countenance he could put on to face adversity, or how labour to support a wife and children, if wife and children were vouchsafed him. 'T would have always been time enough to take up with such an oaf as Beppo, had Carlo proved himself a do-nothing or an evil-doer."

"Always time enough, quotha? Always too soon!" ejaculated Madeo. "As well marry a beggar as a batter-brained ninny like the grazier!"

"And now," returned his mother, dropping her arms and preparing to re-ascend the zigzag stairs cut in the cliff, and leading to the town, built partly on terraced ledges above, and partly on the

crowning summit—" And now, poor Carlo is off, Heaven's holy saints know whither; and my girl sits pining over her distaff, unless when her father's menaces send her weeping into my bosom, to whisper to her poor old mother that she would fain be in her grave."

" How can one wonder that she should fret!" observed the young man, in a more subdued tone of voice. " Such tales as the gossips of Cotracastro have been sending down concerning Carlo! Girolamo, the carrier, swears he made one of the party of brigands by whom Cardinal Ruffo's suite of carriages was stopped and plundered last March, in the Abruzzi; and Barto, the pilot, who was here t' other day, cruising, from Messina, protests that he was seen among the crew of an Algerine felucca, and that he will live to die the death of a dog—(or of a pirate)—namely, to be hung in chains by some English Admiral, yonder, at Valetta; where I beheld, with my eyes, no fewer than eight stout fellows (six Cephalonians and two countrymen of my own) hanging in chains—tarred over, to save them from the sun, which might have rendered them unpleasant neighbours—till they were as black as so many Savoyards after a chimney-sweeping! But here comes my father along the shore; and I shall have a rating in my turn, for having neglected to put out the boat. The breeze is fair for the rocks of San Vito, where

the tunny are apt to lie of an afternoon. So away with you, mother, to Malfinetta, or you may come in for a share of his contrary humour."

And, taking her son's advice, although grumbling while she took it, off scrambled Anetta over the shingles, towards the wearisome staircase in the cliff; and the only shadows that fell on the scorching shore, between the marge of the deep blue sea and the dazzling whiteness of the perpendicular rock, were those of Gioacchino and his son. Anetta paused, half-way in her ascent, and, shading her eyes with her hand, looked down upon the glaring scene (so glaring that not even the rippling murmur of the waves upon the beach could impart an idea of freshness or refreshment to those who stood within reach of the sound,) watching the fishing boat dancing lightsomely upon the summer sea, waiting a propitious moment to unfurl its well-patched sails, and, with the aid of oars, escape the shelter of the cliffs, and take advantage of the earliest evening breeze.

Involuntarily, the wife and mother felt her heart soften towards the two beloved ones standing in earnest colloquy beside that old boat—the good old boat—the stout old boat—which had borne them for so many years through storm and hurricane, and sea perils of all degrees of horror, till Anetta loved and reverenced the trusty bark—every stitch of every seam of whose sails was fa-

miliar to her eye—almost more than her home, and its safe and quiet hearth. The boat had yielded her children's bread, from the hour she had a child to feed. The boat would probably secure, in time, to herself and Gioacchino, a sufficient amount of gains to supply them with the means of subsistence when nature should have ceased to supply the means of exertion. The boat would prevent them from becoming, in their old age, a burthen to their son.

But, although the good woman had been thus energetic in her championship of her daughter, while conversing with Madeo, and although she had previously disputed still more vehemently on the subject with her husband, *she* was not the mother to encourage her pretty Malfina in rebellion against a parent's authority, or in peevish discontent with her destinies.

"How now, girl?" cried she perceiving, as she entered the house, that, during her absence, the desponding beauty had never stirred from her seat, and that she sat there listless and with folded hands, as if given over to her sorrow. "Is it your pleasure to remain fixed on yonder stool for the rest of the day, for all the world like an image of St. Rosabella of Sicily, in her marble shrine? Up, child, and bestir thee! Care killed the cat that would not move her paw in self-defence! Go, fetch in the nets which I left drying on the

wall; or, stay, they were a heavy burthen for thee;—into thy chamber for thy spindle; and"—

"Mother!" ejaculated Malfina, with a fresh burst of tears; "I cannot, cannot work! Bethink thee of all I have learned to-day; bethink thee of the aching head I shall this night lay upon my pillow. Thou wert with me that midsummer evening in the woods of Monteleone, when I knelt down, side by side with Carlo, before the little chapel of Saint Uberto, and swore to be his wife, and his only. My father, too, was there, and saw no cause to forbid the vow; yet, now, demeaning himself as though he had neither heard nor seen, he bids me, on penalty of his malediction, forswear myself; and I must wed with a clod—a boor, who, from the day God put speech into his mouth, never spoke kindly word to living mortal; who comes hither and sits gaping on me with a stupid stare, without other thought than that I should make a stirring housewife for his farm."

"He were an oaf, indeed, did such a notion beset him on seeing thee to-day, *Malfinetta mia!*" exclaimed her mother. "But enough of these complaints. Railing at disaster never yet bettered the hap of man or maiden. Consider rather how best to grapple with the foe—how to encounter the coming event—how to defeat"——

"Defeat my father!" cried the girl. "My

father, whose will is a law to all the house, even to thyself, mother, who have the claim of age and wisdom to share his authority! 'Tis useless to think of it—idle to talk of it. His word has gone forth, and my fate is sealed!"

"Despair was the giant who lost the battle," replied her mother, using a Calabrian proverb. "But 'tis not for me to counsel rebellion against Giaocchino in his home and household. Go, therefore, to thy aunt—go to Signora Jeronima, who, loving her brother well, loves his children better, and may put thee in a way of softening his determination. In an hour or so, the shade of the rampart will be over the path towards her vineyard. Commend me to her, and say I bade thee consult with her how all might be best accommodated."

And, thus authorised, Malfina bathed her swollen eyes, and laced up her disordered bodice, and hung around her neck the cross of gold, the gift of Aunt Jeronima, on the solemn day of her first communion; and, at the appointed time, paced slowly and steadily along the dizzy path cut in the cliffs towards Jeronima's country-house —that neat and prosperous farm which (while her uncle was still landlord of the chief inn of Cotracastro, the *Albergo della Santissima Trinità*, and Aunt Jeronima a bustling hostess) had been the property of the father of her beloved Carlo! It

was under that roof her lover had seen the light —it was along the terraces of that verdant vineyard, his feet had learned to direct their first hazardous steps—it was there death had overtaken his parents—it was there the cloud of adversity had burst in wild destruction over his head.

On these accounts, perhaps, the Signorina Malfinetta experienced a double interest in her visit to her warm-hearted, long-headed aunt; who, although tenderly affected towards both herself and Madeo, yet, never having experienced in her own person the emotions of motherhood, was somewhat of a disciplinarian in her notions of the conduct to be pursued towards young people by those in authority over them. Malfina, in particular, regarded her kind but sharp-voiced relative with considerable awe; and it was this which had made her so careful to refresh her countenance and costume, ere she entered the redoubtable presence of Madona Jeronima, of Rocca Bianca.

There could not be a more graceful, a more striking figure, than that of the young Calabrian, as, stag-like and free of step, she traversed the precipitous path; her slight waist, with its scarlet-laced bodice of mulberry-coloured velvet, edged with a golden fringe; her short full petticoat and dark grey hosen starting out in contrast with the

dazzling whiteness of the chalk-stone; while her snowy linen headgear and narrow apron enhanced the brightness of the healthful hues glowing on her "darkly delicate" cheek. She walked steadily, for care was in her young heart; but lightly, for hope had entered there, while listening to her mother's suggestions. She felt that if any mortal hand could aid her, it must be that of Aunt Jeronima; a woman of most renowned sagacity; a woman whose sage legislation was known to have originated the unparalleled prosperity of the *Albergo della Santissima Trinità;* a woman who had not only governed, but governed without vaunting, a brute of a husband; a woman, above all, who, although a widow at an age entitling her to be called "buxom," had resolutely refused to wed again, even when moved to matrimony by the Podestà of Cotracastro himself—to say nothing of a dozen other pretenders to her hand, lesser in dignity, but greater in personal attraction. Nor had Malfina much apprehension of finding her kinswoman's aid withheld on the present occasion; for, albeit a stickler for the maintenance of parental authority, Jeronima's sympathy was enlisted in behalf of her niece, by a sort of indescribable feeling that her own present prosperity was derived from her enjoyment, however honest and lawful, of the patrimony of poor Carlo; while, for years past, there had existed, between

her brother Gioacchino and herself, a jarring feud, such as is apt to spring up betwixt an elder brother struggling with the destiny of laborious poverty to which he was born, and a younger sister elevated to the consequentiality of competence. She entered the farm, therefore, with a countenance so cheerful, and so little consonant with the actual state of her feelings, that Jeronima had embraced her, and patted her fondly on the cheek, chin, and shoulders; had placed her in the visiter's chair, and invited her to a cup of Rocca Bianca wine; had asked her tidings of Gioacchino, Anetta, and Madeo, and interrupted her reply, communicating fifty idle particulars of her own affairs (from her dispute with the exciseman, to a skirmish between her dog Pontone and a neighbour's cat), before she discerned, from the expression of Malfina's countenance, that ought was amiss.

And now, what discussions, what confidences, what counsels, ensued between the two kinswomen? What tales of wo were poured into the ear of the elder!—what instigations of stratagem were suggested to the adoption of the younger! It suits us not, at present, to unfold; and no eavesdropper was at hand to betray the mystery! The *jalousies* were closed, to screen the little mansion from the evening sun: Monna Jeronima's two handmaidens were engrossed with their

household avocations—the one in carding flax for the distaff of her mistress, the other grinding maize in a hand-mill; the vine-dressers were busied afar off in their calling; even the great house-dog, Pontone, lay asleep within the shadow of the porch. There was none to listen, none to pry; the result of the conference could alone bear witness to its nature!

The first incident from which any deduction might be gathered, was the altered aspect of Malfina, when, after a visit of two hours or so, she bade adieu to her loving aunt, and the gay, though unassured step with which she measured her homeward way. Anetta — who, growing alarmed by the unusual prolongation of her daughter's absence, came forward nearly a third of the way to meet her—noted from afar the buoyancy of her tread, and the air of satisfaction with which she gazed around her on the sky and ocean, the only objects perceptible from that precipitous road; and wisely inferred that Jeronima had imparted comfort, even if she had not given advice.

The following day, some hours after the return of Gioacchino and his son from their little cruise, with a boat's freight of the finest anchovies it had been their luck to land for many weeks, a messenger, (one of the farm damsels) arrived at the fisherman's cottage, from Rocca Bianca, requesting

the favour that Malfina might be spared for a few days to bear company to her aunt, who was ill at ease in her health, and had more household business on her hands than she could well perform without aid. There was the fruit harvest and the vintage at hand—labours in the field, and labours in the kitchen to be performed—besides farm-accounts to be made up, and a thousand other matters in which her little niece might opportunely bear a part. And Gioacchino, willing to assist the vintage of a sister who failed not annually to bestow upon him a hogshead of her choicest wine, and not sorry perhaps to rid himself for a time of the melancholy spectacle of Malfina's doleful visage, readily consented; and, after a duteous salutation of both her parents, and with Bettina bearing for her a modest package of her best array, away went Carlo's true love to his ancient home of Rocca Bianca—to lie sleepless in the chamber which had once been his—to sit musing under shelter of the trellised vines where his childhood had sported—to think of him day and night, night and day—and all by way of preparative for her bridal with another.

Meanwhile, that other, during her absence, refrained not from his accustomed visits to the fisherman's hut; his fat turkeys and guinea-fowls were lavished no less freely than before; nay,

poor Beppo appeared to take almost as much pleasure in staring at the swarthy and contemptuous countenance of Madeo, as he had been wont to do in fixing his inexpressive eyes upon the fair and gentle face of Malfinetta. He came, in short, daily; and held long private confabulations with old Gioacchino, touching his approaching nuptials, and the prospects of his married life; for the fisherman of Cotracastro still affected to see no difficulties in the case, and to understand that his family were unanimous in desire for the match.

Malfina was apprised of all this; for Madeo, between the duties of his calling, found many a spare moment to make his way up to the vineyard; and it was on returning from one of these hurried visits, about a week after his sister's departure for Rocca Bianca, that he one evening disclosed to his parents the unwelcome tidings that he had found her looking ill, and that his aunt, Jeronima, was painfully anxious concerning her health.

"The poor girl complains of an aching head, and her eyes are dull and heavy," observed Madeo. "My aunt is grievously afraid she may have been visited by a sunstroke—for her indisposition has lasted ever since yesterday, when she was rash enough to lie down in the orchard, after toiling among the peach-trees, gathering fruit for drying.

She returned to the house, afterwards, shivering and heart-sick."

"*Ahi di me! Poverinetta!*" ejaculated her mother; and had not Gioacchino been preoccupied by his own feelings of resentment against his daughter, and projects concerning her, he could not but have noticed the coolness with which Anetta received intelligence so alarming; she whose motherly terrors had often been excited by a splinter in Madeo's finger, or by Malfina's loss of appetite for a single meal.

"And what has been done for the girl?" was his surly interrogation.

"My aunt has prepared her an infusion of balm-leaves and strawberry root," said Madeo, in a sorrowful tone; "but I doubt whether such feeble remedies will be of much avail."

"You really think your sister's malady of grave import?" observed his father, with growing anxiety.

"She has not touched food since she was attacked," replied Madeo.

"Go prepare the boat," said Gioacchino, in a still more subdued tone. "The wind is fair; let us try and find a mullet for her supper. A mullet stewed in white wine is a light and stimulant dish."

"Not half so good for her as a cup of thin polenta," cried Anetta.

" Besides," added Madeo, " my aunt bade me say she would be glad that you or my mother stepped up, in the course of the afternoon, to Rocca Bianca; she wishes you to judge for yourself of the invalid."

" I have the tunny net to mend," said his mother. " Your last day's fishing left a rent in it, through which a whale might find passage."

And Gioacchino, instead of expressing his surprise at his wife's preference of so unimportant a duty to that of visiting her sick child, merely replied, " In that case, I will go myself. We must not leave too much responsibility on my sister's head."

And carefully as he was in the habit of abstaining from visits to the Signora Jeronima's thriving farm (the grapes of which, Madeo had been apt to say, in his boyhood, were sour in his father's sight), he set off, staff in hand, to Rocca Bianca, eager to assure himself that Malfina's was no feigned indisposition; and earnestly hoping that it might not prove so serious as to interfere with the nuptials of his friend Beppo.

" 'Tis strange"— mused the old man, as his heavy fisher's boots clamped along the cliff, and he pulled his red cap over his eyes, as if it could afford a screen from the western sun—" 't is passing strange, that Rocca Bianca, which has already been accounted so salubrious a spot, should, of

a sudden, be invaded as by a *mal' aria*. First, my sister, (strong of temperament as one of king Joachim's *gendarmes*) falls sick, and must be tended by her niece. Then her niece, who, till now, hath never known an ailment, becomes afflicted in her turn. A sunstroke?—a sunstroke after peach gathering in a shady orchard! A sunstroke?—she, who from babyhood has been accustomed to defy the very glare of noontide—here, on the cliffs, in the eye of the sun; yonder, on the beach, with the burnished reflection of the waves! It can scarcely be!—'t is fretting that has done all. The wench has ceased to sleep, and ceased to eat; and her strength has suddenly failed her. All the beggar Carlo's doing—all the handiwork of the beggar Carlo! No *mal' aria* at Rocca Bianca when *he* was harboured there, or I should now be rid of his name. And yet—holy San Gennaro!—if all this were pretext!—if the damsel were bent on fooling me, to obtain a remission of my decree touching her marriage! Be on thy guard, Gioacchino! 'T were a bitter jest that a beard as grey as thine were plucked in derision by a couple of weaklings; or, it may be three—for, if the girl be shamming, no doubt my sister is of her counsels. Was she not herself constantly practising on the soft head and soft heart of my poor brother-in-law of the *Santissima Trinità*, who is dead and gone?"

But, on entering the vineyard habitation, and casting his eyes upon his daughter, Gioacchino's mistrust vanished. It was not that she was either flushed by a fever or pallid from exhaustion; that she lay reclined upon her couch, or otherwise assumed the air and attitude of an invalid. But poor Malfina's distemperature seemed rather of the mind than body. She looked stupified and insensible to what was passing around her; replied not to her father's salutation; and when her tender aunt issued orders to young Bettina her handmaiden, to set the *jalousie* ajar, to afford a surer view of the countenance of the invalid, she took no note of the bright rays which fell upon her face; although Gioacchino involuntarily cried aloud to have the blinds closed again, ejaculating that it was only too plain the poor wench had been visited by a *colpo di sole!*

"*Un colpo di sole!*" exclaimed Bettina, contemptuously. "What Calabrian born ever suffered from a sunstroke? In our blessed country, the sun and the people are too kindly disposed towards each other to fall out. A blind man might see what ails the sweet young mistress. *E tarantata Messer* Gioacchino—*è tarantata!*"

"*Tarantata?*" cried the fisherman, in dismay.

"You are too forward, child—who asked your opinion?" exclaimed Bettina's mistress, rebuk-

ingly, while Malfinetta remained torpid in her chair, apparently unconscious of the discussion.

"But has the tarantula been actually seen, sister, in your orchard?" cried Gioacchino again—uttering that dreaded name with the true Calabrian sense of loathing.

"Not that I am well assured of—not that I have ever *seen*," replied Signora Jeronima, with mysterious significance.

"But you have heard?" resumed the old man, his dark cheek waxing almost livid with terror.

"I have heard, I admit (just as I but now heard the ejaculation of the goose Bettina), that more than one tarantula of prodigious size has been known to breed in the old wall betwixt the orchard and vineyard. But what then? My predecessor, farmer Benettone, brought up a large family at Rocca Bianca, without one's hearing of a *tarantato* among *his* children; and why your daughter, Malfina, of all people in the world, should come to spend a few weeks at my vineyard, and fall in with a tarantula on the first day or so"——

"I don't know—my mind misgives me," interrupted the fisherman, "If a tarantula have been really seen there"———

" And in what farm of all Calabria has not the tarantula been seen?" interrupted Jeronima in her turn — satisfied that she had touched the chord of one of her brother's most prejudiced superstitions. " In the maize-fields, or among the clover-pastures, in vineyard, olive-ground mulberry plantation, wood, forest, warren, or even quarry, the fatal spider, at one time or other, has been known to dispense its venom. No spot is safe; and I know not why my poor orchard should inspire you with greater apprehensions than any other place."

" Bah!—I meant no offence to you or your orchard!" cried Gioacchino, pettishly. " But look at my girl, and you are answered. You cannot but discern in her fallen countenance and lustreless eyes that the worst has happened. She has been bitten, sister!—she has been bitten! —Bettina is right—Bettina has more sense than all of us put together :—*la Malfina è tarantata*."

" Heaven be good unto us; Let us trust *not*!" piously ejaculated the wily whilome hostess of the *Santissima Trinità*. " *Tarantata?*—a *tarantata* in our family? Why, unless she be speedily exercised, the poor girl may never again enjoy a rational frame of mind! She will pine, and pine and pine — and there will be an end of her;— she, who, if I rightly understand, brother, was

pledged in marriage to Signor Giuseppe, the buffalo-feeder, and was to wed him before the close of the month."

"*Ahi!*—my poor friend Beppo!—There is an end of his hopes!" exclaimed her father. "'Tis of the girl's health and not her bridal, we must now be thinking! *Una tarantata!*—Unlucky Malfina! I have not so much as heard of a tarantula at Cotracastro for the last twenty years. My old playmate, Ninettina, the carrier's daughter, was the only *tarantata* I ever happened to see; and she, poor dear, threw herself from the cliff, and was dashed to pieces before the fitting ceremonies could be performed for her relief. I admit that my daughter wears much such a countenance as she wore; and if *you* feel convinced, sister, that Malfina has been stung"——

"The Signorina's left foot was strangely inflamed on the first day of the attack," observed the officious Bettina.

"No time must be lost," continued the fisherman. "I will make my way into town, ere I return home to my wife, and consult Fra Eustatio of the Franciscans, touching the measures to be pursued."

"Well thought of," replied Jeronima, casting a glance towards her niece. "In a week's time comes the vintage moon. All Cotracastro, for the love they bear our family, will wish to witness the

ceremony, which cannot be more advantageously performed than here, at my farm. So soon as you and Anetta have made your arrangements, let the affair be duly proclaimed. I would not have the business inhospitably done. Your daughter's young companions and *their* companions must be invited. Let Anetta mention it to-morrow at market—let Madeo speak of it in the harbour; since the misfortune *has* occurred, let us meet it nobly."

"For my part," cried Gioacchino, "I could never see the wisdom of making such a calamity an affair of feasting and junketing."

"'Tis from time immemorial the custom of our province," replied Jeronima; "and never heard I yet of the land that was bettered by sitting aside its ancient customs. On this head, moreover, we have nothing to learn from other climes. My old friend, the Podestà, who is book-learned, and can read the tongues of nations that exist no longer, assures me that in no country has the tarantula so fatal a venom as here in Calabria, or yonder in Apulia; and it follows that we must be better studied in the means of cure. The irritated nerves are to be soothed by dancing, and dancing only; that movement can be excited in the patient but by the well-measured strains of a lively music; and since music must needs be provided for the ceremony, and the *Tarantata*

enjoy intervals of repose in her exertions, why not allow her young playmates to distract their thoughts from the sad circumstance, by dancing in their turn? In short, *caro mio fratello*, 't is the custom; and *we* must bend to and observe it, like our neighbours."

In pursuance of this opinion—an opinion to which so many of the wisest elsewhere than in Calabria, are forced to subscribe—were the preparations of the two families achieved. A certain day of August, when the moon would be at full, was set apart for the observances which were to restore the fisherman's daughter to the enjoyment of her health and reason; and all talk of her marriage was suspended.

Poor Gioacchino, in the interim, paid daily visits to the sufferer, who maintained a mourful silence in his presence. Anetta busied herself preparing new garments for the *Tarantata*, to grace the ceremony; while her young friends—including many from the villages around Cotracastro—made arrangements to take a part in the evening's recreation. News that a *Tarantata* was to dance away her disorder at the vineyard of Rocca Bianca, where noble preparations were in hand, flew from hamlet to hamlet. Malfina was duly compassionated—themselves mutually congratulated; and, if the private anticipations of

Anetta and her daughter were not fulfilled—that, if Carlo were lurking anywhere within thirty leagues' distance, the intelligence must reach his ears, and suggest his immediate return to his afflicted love—it was not for want of taking sufficient pains to circulate the report.

Nevertheless, the day approached; and no Carlo was seen at Cotracastro. Madeo—who, although excluded from the female councils of the family, and wholly unsuspicious of collusion between his mother, sister, and aunt, prosecuted, of his own accord, and in all directions, inquiries after the object of Malfina's attachment—could learn nothing further of his movements than he had already gathered from Barto and the carrier; gave up all expectation of his return; and had nothing to reply, when his father announced that, so soon as the *Tarantata's* recovery was effected—perhaps before her return from the vineyards—the ceremony of exorcism must be followed by that of her marriage with Beppo of the Maremma.

At Rocca Bianca, meanwhile, all was bustle and activity, to the heart's content of that stirring housewife, Signora Jeronima. It seemed as if the industry of the *padrona* and her domestics were proportionate to the immobility of the hapless *Tarantata;* who sat transfixed in her chair, or, at

least, contrived to be found so when visited by her father and brother, or subjected to the scrutiny of the Podestà and Fra Eustatio.

Bettina and Chiodetta, the serving maids, could scarcely find hands enough for the spicing of cakes and the seasoning of sausages; and such kneading, baking boiling, basting, and stewing, as filled the kitchen of the farm with appetizing exhalations, had never been known there since the wedding of farmer Benettone. Till the very day of the great event, Jeronima was scarcely able to rest a moment from her labour, or inquire of herself whether it were likely to prove labour in vain.

It was upon a wide terrace, intervening between her little dwelling and the "farmy fields" beyond, that the singular ceremony of "*de-tarantalization*" (since a word needs must be coined) was appointed; the hard surface of which, of beaten chalkstone, was neatly swept and garnished for the occasion, and its bordering of lavender, marjorum, and sweet basil, duly trimmed and refreshed. At one extremity, stood an arbour, trellised over with vines in rich bearing, in which it was purposed that the father and mother of the *Tarantata*, as too much interested in the event to join the sports of the night, were to take up their retreat; before the entrance of which was placed a large armchair, covered with tapestry (a relic of the Benet-

tone family,) to receive the heroine of the night; a stool being prepared, on either side, for the Podestà and the Franciscan, who were to officiate in the portentous rite.

At the opposite extremity of the terrace were benches for the spectators; and, facing the central flight of steps leading from the house, sat the musicians, some eight or ten in number, forming an orchestra such as no town of the insignificance of Cotracastro could be expected to furnish, saving in that fatherland of music—harmonious Italy.

Scarcely had the sun gone down when the bidden guests, attired in holiday array, began to assemble; till the platform of the terrace became gradually variegated with that wondrous diversity of colours which enlivens the Calabrian, Apulian, and Neapolitan costumes; and while the golden west still gleamed in gorgeous radiance, and the Mediterranean waves reflected far below the cloudless brightness of its overhanging canopy, a shout from the gathering throng proclaimed the arrival of the Podestà, the great man of Cotracastro; and the group of Malfina's family and friends immediately took their places in and near the arbour. A solemn pause ensued, and all eyes were turned towards the steps, expecting that the sufferer was to follow. But no Malfina appeared. The musicians sat impatiently with their Calabrian bag-

pipes, their clarionets, and oboes in their hands, occasionally venturing a stray note by way of reminder; the young people stood fretting side by side, eager to take their part in the interlude; the elder females gathered mysteriously together by twos and threes, maundering over anecdotes of all the *tarantate* it had been the lot of their long lives to behold; insinuating that some, in spite of all the rites, spiritual and temporal, administered, had never wholly recovered; that the tarantula was increasing fearfully in the neighbourhood of Cotracastro; and, finally, hinting that Signor Giuseppe would be a bold man if he ventured on an immediate marriage with a bride so afflicted.

The twilight grew duskier and duskier, and these murmurs deepened with its shades! A tone of mysticism seemed to pervade the assembly. The children who had accompanied their parents, drew closer to the side of their mothers, and one or two curly headed little beings were seen to creep under cover of the broidered aprons, or pendent faldette of their matronly protectresses; till, on a sudden, "uprose the yellow moon" of vintage (that vast and glowing orb of southern climates, whose reflexion almost rivals the sunshine of our own more chilly latitudes,) and in a moment all was light and cheerfulness around. The trees sent down at a distance their

lengthened shadows; but, on the terrace, all was hallowed by the clear but subdued brightness of intense moonlight!

And now, as if the scene had grown into accordance with her feelings, came forth the *Tarantata*, escorted on the left by Aunt Jeronima, and on the right hand, led solemnly and silently by the Franciscan friar—at once her ghostly and bodily comforters, her mind's and health's physicians; and although, as she gravely traversed the terrace, Malfina's eyes were seen to be fixed upon the ground, her cheek of a deathlike paleness, and her brow inexpressively sad, few of her own sex could refrain from exclaiming upon the beauty of her features and figure as she passed; while the young Calabrian vintagers and shepherds interchanged many a merry by-word, touching the anxiety Messer Giuseppe must feel for the recovery of so lovely a bride.

If such, however, were the case, the inexpressive face of the buffalo-grazier gave no sign of his inquietude. Stationed hard by the arbour, with his dull impassive stare fixed on the proceedings of the night, which he had come from the marshes to witness, accompanied by a whole train of his herdsmen and dependants, Beppo evinced no interest in the scene around—even when the Podestà, rising from his stool, advanced towards the chair in which Malfina had been seated by Fra

Eustatio, and while the Franciscan pronounced a brief form of prayer over her head, placed in her hands a drawn sword, on the up-pointed blade of which the moonlight was observed to fall "with a chill and ghastly glitter;" and, lo! as if respondent to the attitude of intercession with which Malfina up-raised the weapon towards the summer sky, a slow and solemn strain breathed mournfully upon the air—a slow anthem-like measure, moved by whose inspirations, the *Tarantata* advanced towards the space marked out for the dancers, and, with many a graceful change of posture, waved the glittering sword successively towards the point of the sun's rising, the sun's seting, the northern and southern poles.

Every eye was upon her, as she accurately timed her movements to the grave and almost mystic notes; till, by degrees, the musicians quickened the strain, and, after a series of complicated steps, and well-imagined attitudes, the "Tarantula-bitten," as if overcome by fatigue, suddenly dropped the point of the sword, and, after leaning for a moment's repose upon the hilt, retreated to her chair of state, leaving the terrace free for the performance of the guests; while Fra Eustatio and her good aunt hastened towards her, sprinkled her with a mixture of cold water and citron juice, and fanned her with one of the ample fans of the country.

Gayer measures now succeeded. The youths and maidens of Cotracastro and its environs, warmly as they regarded Malfina, the fisherman's daughter, were not so wholly engrossed by her critical situation as to refuse themselves the gratification of a fandango, when the *fagotti* and the gay castanets were sounding, and the moon shining softly upon their revels; and, amid the stir of many feet, and the sound of gurgling laughter, the *Tarantata* was, for a time, forgotten.

At the close of the little divertisement, however, when the youthful couples, retiring from the platform, wandered among the trellise-covered vineyard walks, as if to seek a cooler atmosphere, Malfina was again beheld seated in her chair, surrounded by aunt and mother, Franciscan and Podestà; and no sooner had time been afforded to the musicians to recover breath and elbow-strength than a word was whispered in her ear by Fra Eustatio, and again she quitted her place, and advanced into the centre of the terrace. Alone and unaccompanied, the chief oboe-player immediately commenced one of the favourite provincial airs of Calabria—a hymn to the virgin, an "Ave Maria" often heard along the shore of Cotracastro at evening-tide—and, as if by spontaneous impulse, Malfina recommenced her slow and gliding movements; till, at the close of the air, the whole orchestra burst suddenly into the wild and hurried

measure of the *Pizzica*—the most popular form of the Neapolitan Tarantella, and obviously derived from the superstitions connected with the bite of the tarantula.

Madeo instantly stepped forward from the throng, to give his hand to his sister, lest Beppo, in an ill-timed fit of gallantry, should force himself on her acceptance as a partner; and so remarkable was the beauty and agility of the pair—so well studied their movements—and so rapid their evolutions—that an involuntary cry of applause arose from the spectators. Yet, even her brother's vigour of limb was no match for the fatal excitement of the *Tarantata*; and, as Madeo was tired down, another and another partner succeeded, and still Malfina danced on, unwearied, and apparently, unwearable.

The musicians seemed to gather inspiration from her energy. Quicker and quicker grew the notes, and wilder and wilder the rapidity of her steps, till, at length, as if smitten by an invisible blow, she fell senseless to the earth, and was borne by her brother into the arbour, whence her father and mother had withdrawn, at Jeronima's suggestion, to refresh themselves with a cup of wine.

Chiodetta and Bettina, therefore, flew, at the call of the young fisherman, to refresh their Signorina Padrona, with a renewal of her fragrant shower-bath; and, reassured by their attendance,

Madeo, tempted by the lively strains of the *Tarantella*, which had now become general, quitted the arbour to join the dancers, the moment restored consciousness dawned in the eyes of his sister.

Gay, gay scene!—The rattling castanets keeping time to the lively measure; the flaunting robes of the pretty Cotracastrians, and the loose linen sleeves of their partners, borne floating on the air by the buoyancy of their movements; the tawdry lace of their costume glittering in the moonlight; the bright smiles of their upturned faces scarcely less brilliantly revealed; joyousness bursting forth into laughter and familiar cries; names of tenderness playfully exchanged; many a gay challenge spoken and answered—combined to characterize one of those curious national exhibitions, whose mirth springs from the heart, and whose aim and origin are alike pure and unsophisticated.

By degrees, the object of the meeting was forgotten in universal hilarity. The old feasted and made merry; the young, hand clasped in hand, luxuriated in the geniality of the hour and season; nor was it till loud and repeated shrieks were heard to issue from the arbour, and Bettina was seen pushing her way through the throng in search of her mistress, who was doing the honours of the banquet within, that the attention of the dancers could be directed from their pastimes.

"What ails thee, child, to be pale and trembling thus?" cried Jeronima, in dismay, as her handmaiden burst into the hall and stood panting before her. "Speak, Bettina—is it my niece's turn to bear her part in the dance?"

"Heaven's mercy be on her—she will dance no more!" ejaculated the gasping girl.

"Is Malfina worse—does her indisposition increase?" inquired Jeronima, making a private signal to her handmaiden.

"No further use in feint or stratagem!" said Bettina, lowering her voice. "Ah! mistress, mistress!—I misdoubted me that evil would come of these mummeries. 'T is a deriding of the mysteries of Providence, to presume to act the part of a *Tarantata* without"——

"Silence!" whispered Jeronima sternly, "or tell me at once what ails my niece?"

"She is lost, madam"——

"Dead?" interrupted the horror-struck Jeronima in her turn.

"Worse a thousand times:—gone—carried off by armed men;—borne away from the harbour by brigands!"

"Impossible!" exclaimed Jeronima, herself so prone to stratagem that she was ever on the look-out for deceit in others, "'T is some jest or some artifice."

"Neither jest nor artifice, but in truth," per-

sisted the girl. "As the Signorina was reposing herself on the bench, a man pushed me rudely aside from the arbour-entrance, seized her as she sat; bore her forth in his arms; and when I would have cried aloud upon the guests for succour, three of his comrades rushed forth from among the trellises, and stopped my mouth, and held me fast, while the ruffian, to whom the ways of the place seemed familiar, fled with his burthen through the orchard-gate, and so regained the open fields. It was not till they were out of sight that the men left in charge of myself, released me, and made off after their companion. Then did I scream aloud and aloud for aid."

"Where is Madeo—where is my nephew?" exclaimed Jeronima, her copper-coloured face growing livid with horror.

"What is the matter?" demanded Fra Eustatio, cutting open and peppering a noble watermelon, on which his eyes were fondly riveted. "Friend Gioacchino—friend"——

"Hush!—on your life, alarm not my poor brother," interposed Jeronima. And rushing from the house, she made off in search of the stout and active brother of the abducted damsel. "Know you what has chanced?" was her abrupt inquiry, as, at length, she encountered Madeo, guiding his partner, one of the fairest girls of Cotracastro, among the trellised walks. "Your sister is

carried off by a villain, and my mind misgives me that 'tis no other than Benettone's son."

"My sister carried off?" ejaculated Madeo.

"How were the ruffians attired?" demanded Aunt Jeronima of Bettina, whom she had dragged with her in pursuit of Madeo.

"Alas, Madam!—I scarcely dare to tell you," faltered the girl.

"Speak out, dearest Bettina," said the young fisherman breathless with anxiety.

"All four were dressed after the fashion of the Abruzzians," was her reply; "and bore arquebuses in their hands, and poniards by their sides!"

"Brigands, as I am a Christian woman!" cried Jeronima. "Madeo, Madeo! not a moment must be lost. Pursue them, my dear boy—pursue the villains, and rescue your unhappy sister!"

"Pursue them?" echoed Madeo, in a desponding tone. "Easily said, but how to be accomplished? Unless they were well mounted, think you they had ventured on such an enterprise? I have neither horse nor mule, and ere I procure one all trace of these wretches will be lost!"

"Signor Giuseppe's horse and those of his men are stabled at the *Albergo della Santissima Trinità*," observed Bettina; who having a suitor of her own in the farmer's service, took good note of his movements.

" Where is Beppo?" cried Madeo. " His will is good towards our family; he will lend me his best horse for such an errand."

" Signor Giuseppe was standing beside my mistress in the hall, when I brought in the fatal tidings," observed Bettina. And immediately all three set off to the house in pursuit of the farmer. But neither Beppo, nor a single man of his train, was to be found. It appeared that, having overheard the startling intelligence communicated by the serving girl, he had collected his people and left the house; and Jeronima's heart misgave her at this announcement; for she remembered the avowals by which Bettina's communications had been accompanied, and doubted not that the farmer had quitted her mansion in disgust. Madeo, meanwhile, hastened towards the hostelry of the *Santissima Trinità*. But here again he was too late—Beppo and his men were not to be heard of in Cotracastro; and the young sailor, as deficient in equestrianism as most men of his calling, was forced to content himself with a broken winded mule, to pursue the route pointed by Bettina as the track of the abductor. All, meanwhile, was desert at Rosa Bianca—the spot so lately crowded with revellers was now solitary. The guests had dispersed; Jeronima and her brother parted in mutual dudgeon; and Anetta alone thought proper to pass the night under the roof of her

sister-in-law rather than brave the fury of her husband.

While these scenes of confusion were passing at the vineyard, the plight of the pseudo-tarantata was scarcely less deplorable than that of her anxious relatives. The shock of her sudden abduction, following on the exhaustion of frame produced by her exertions in the dance, plunged her, indeed, for a time, into a state of insensibility; and when, on recovering her senses, she found herself borne rapidly through the air mounted on a strange horse, and even encircled by the arms of a stranger, a second fainting fit bore witness to the reality of her terrors. By degrees, the freshness of the night air restored her to herself, when, as her heavy head drooped over the shoulder of her mysterious companion, the perpetrator of so gross an outrage, a well-known voice penetrated the inmost recesses of her ear and heart!

"What dost thou fear, Malfina?" cried the voice once so familiar and so precious. "Although *thou* hast proved faithless, and consented to pledge hand and faith with another, I mean thee no harm. What art afraid of?—Thou shalt neither be served up whole for the supper of my trusty messmates of the forest; nor sent back in quarters to thy jackass of a father, like the vinta-

ger's pretty daughter of Priolli, whom her parents forced to break faith with the gallant Massaroni."

Words such as these, and uttered in a tone of the bitterest taunting, served only to redouble the terror of the captive.—" I have borne much for thy sake, Carlo!" she faltered, trembling in every limb as she spoke. " Upbraid me not—menace me not."

" Calls she my mirth a menace?" exclaimed the brigand, bursting into a shout of coarse laughter. " *Madre di Dio, Malfinina!*—Thou wilt chance to learn the true nature of a menace, ere thou hast dwelt a month with my plain spoken comrades in the greenwood. No, no, pretty maiden! *I* utter no threats to such as thou!—Although, forsooth, thou couldst, without scruple, forsake thy betrothed love, to give thy hand to a hog driver and buffalo butcher—although the fatted calf is even now ready to be slain, down yonder in the Maremma, for thy bridal—I have no word of reproach to cast at thee. Thou hast but acted after the impulses of woman's nature—filthy, mischief-seeking, graceless, wanton woman! Well, all is for the best! Hadst thou, by faith and truth, maintained my esteem, it had perhaps, been a bitter lesson to me, holding thee as I do to my breast, to remember all I once was and hoped to be, and all that circumstances have made me;

while, as it is, I can say to thee freely, as I have said to others as pretty as thyself, ' Away with me to the greenwood, gentiletta! and thou shalt lead a merrier life than city, ay, or court, could afford thee.' "

" Carlo!—have mercy on me—refrain from these cruel words," said Malfina, at length gathering strength to reply. " Others have said this of thee, Carlo, and I refused to believe them; but now"—

" Said *what* of me?" sternly interrupted her companion, tightening his grasp of her slender waist.

" That thou hadst taken to the mountains, and joined a band of marauders; and that wantons and plunderers were associated with thy enterprise," replied Malfina, with the forced calmness of desperation.

" And if it were so?" cried the robber, " (and thou shalt shortly judge for thyself, for we are within a three hours' ride of the forest where my captain is cantoned for the vintage season), if it were so—if a price were set on my head—if I avowed myself in thy hearing, thief, assassin, traitor—what then? How often hast thou sworn to be mine for richer or poorer, for better for worse? And now (saving the wifehood of the case, for we have, at present, neither priest nor monk in our band) thon mayst fulfil thy vow.

Thou wilt have no fat buffaloes in thy close, no hogsheads of wine in thy cellar, no dainty waiting-maid to lace up thy bodice; but a score of trusty fellows shall wait, carabine in hand, to do thy bidding; and, to say nothing of a few sacks of gold pieces which I may be tempted to consign to thy keeping, I will bestow on thee a string of pearls for a rosary, and a diamond cross withal, such as might entice to sin the Ursuline Abbess of Cotracastro. Would the Maremma grazier do more for his bride?"

"That I should be compelled to give ear to such insults!" murmured Malfina, folding her hands fervently on her bosom. "That for the love of this bravo, I should have presumed to reject an honest man's affection!"

"So proud and so fierce?" quoth Carlo, bursting again into loud and hollow laughter. "Well! I have seen fiercer and prouder tamed into most dovelike softness, after a week's schooling in the forest. Women are of a metal easy to mould, if the furnace be hot enough. It took me half a year or more ere I could learn to stab, and brawl, and dice, and drink, and riot, as became one of the Knights of Moonlight; but I warrant me to train to submission the faithful wife (that was to have been) of the buffalo-driver, Beppo, in less than an eighth of the time."

And finding that his victim was now too com-

pletely overcome to attempt either remonstrance or intercession, the brigand flew a small whistle, and his companions, over whom he seemed to exercise a certain degree of authority, rode up in a moment, when a conversation ensued, exciting to a still higher pitch the terror and disgust of their unfortunate prisoner.

Hitherto, the route pursued by the brigands had traversed the open country, between vineyards and corn-fields; but just as they saw fit to ride more compactly, they reached the confines of the forest of Monteleone; and it conveyed a sensation of bitter anguish to the heart of the captive, to find herself an object of scorn and persecution to him with whom, in those very woods, she had breathed her earliest vows of womanly tenderness.

"Carlo!" whispered she, when, as well as the darkening shades of the overbranching trees would permit her to ascertain their approach to the little hermitage and shrine of Saint Uberto—"there is God over all! This is the spot where we knelt together, in His holy name, for the utterance of a hallowed vow. Profane it not by acts of cruelty and violence, or evil will surely overtake thee!"

"Brava — bravissima!" cried the brigand. "She talks of Providence like a bare-footed friar. It seems I am not only to obtain a mistress in my pretty little Malfinina, but a preacher,

and, it may be, a confessor? Where didst learn these pious doctrines, sweetest? Was it by the bite of the tarantula thou wert inoculated with the true faith? Alas! the lovely *Tarantata* deigns not to reply!" And, as if to punish the obstinacy of her silence, the ruffian ventured upon a familiar caress, which caused a shriek of indignation to burst from the lips of the terrified Malfina. But, at the same instant, she felt herself precipitated to the ground; and, as she lay half-stunned by the fall, confused sounds reached her ears—the detonation of fire-arms—the trampling of many horses—the imprecations of angry voices. A hope of rescue, of deliverance, lightened her heavy heart. Heavy moans revealed to her that the brigand, from whose arms she was scarcely yet disentangled, was severely, if not mortally wounded. She soon learned, from the exclamations of the horsemen by whom she was surrounded, that two of his comrades were already dead; and, on hearing orders issued to bind the wounded Carlo and the remaining prisoner to two of the stoutest horses, it was a source of mingled joy and mortification to her, to perceive that the friendly hands by which she was carefully lifted from the dust, and gently replaced on horseback, were those of the grazier, Giuseppe. Warmly as she expressed her gratitude for his aid, every word uttered by Malfina tended to

betray the excess of her disappointment, that she was not indebted for her safety to her father or her brother.

" Spare your protestations of gratitude, young woman," said Beppo, in his usual short dry tone; as, having seated Malfina before him on his sheep's-skin saddle, he turned his horse's head towards Cotracastro —" they will deceive neither of us. The events of the night are scarcely more satisfactory to me than to yourself. By God's will, I have captured a notorious bandit; and, thank Heaven, his blood will be on the hands of justice rather than on mine. But mistake not the motive of my perilling my life in the pursuit.

" It was for no love, still less for any respect I bear you; for this very night I have gathered that, from the idle prating of your wily aunt, which proves you to be alike liars and impostors. I sought you to be my wife, Signora Malfina, though other damsels of the district would have brought me the dowry in which your were wanting, and faces little less comely than your own, because Gioacchino the fisherman is the honestest man inthe district; and I believed that his blood was warm in your veins. I had watched your girlhood; I honoured the steady straightforwardness of your attachment to your young playmate; it pleased me; and I saw, or I thought I saw, truth and goodness in your face. I was mis-

taken. You had the heart to wring tears from the eyes of your old father; had the cunning to deceive the Podestà, to mislead the skill of Fra Eustatio. Now, therefore, Signora Malfina, fear nothing farther from my courtship. Did the whole province of Calabria afford no other bride, assure yourself that Giuseppe would sue for your hand no more. To your father would I fain restore you unharmed; for the respect I bear his grey hairs and upright dealing; once safe under guardianship of his right arm, and you become a stranger in my sight."

Poor Malfina was too profoundly absorbed in her own reflections, to be acutely sensible of the bitterness of this rebuke, or resent it towards the offender; and, when in safety in the bosom of her family, she was too overjoyed by her unlooked for redemption to be resentful of the lofty contempt of her deliverer. But when days, weeks, and months passed away—when Carlo, who, after long confinement in prison, was about to be released, on the refusal of Beppo and his men to come forward in court to identify his person, was incarcerated anew, and eventually condemned to the galleys, as the convicted perpetrator of the outrage committed on Cardinal Ruffo—when her brother Madeo rang hourly in her ears praises of Giuseppe's valour, in her behalf, and magnanimity towards his former rival—when Anetta

and aunt Jeronima united in a declaration that they had altogether misunderstood the character of the grazier, which proved to be as firm and generous as that of Benettone's son was base and contemptible—her conscience reproved her, and her wounded feelings attested its accusations, that, by her own folly, her own faults, she had forfeited the regard of a man of feeling, sense, and integrity!

Gioacchino, when alone with his daughter, occasionally gave her to understand that explanations had taken place between himself and his worthy friend, and that he condoled with her on the loss of so good a husband; and poor Malfina, although too proud to admit her disappointment and declare her change of feeling in favour of the contemned Beppo, refused, for his sake, more than one eager and wealthy pretender to her hand. She prized him, indeed, for the very scorn with which he had overwhelmed her; admired his contempt for her shallow artifices; bore open testimony to the bravery and nobleness of his proceedings towards her once favoured Carlo; and secretly resolved to "wither upon the virgin stem in single blessedness," for his sake. She even ceased to remember the surliness of his address, while reflecting upon his upright and honourable principles. From the period of her terrible adventure, not a cloud was ever known

to shade the ingenuousness of her character. Her word became proverbial for frankness, her deed for honesty. But it was not till the integrity of her principles had been established by five years unswerving probity and truth, that the bluff buffalo-driver was tempted to forswear himself by renewing his proposals to her father.

Jeronima, to whom the singleness of her niece had been a source of deep regret, would fain have celebrated the long-wished for bridal at Rocca Bianca. But Malfina, to whom the remembrance of the tarantula scene afforded such bitter reminiscences, would not hear of it; and Giuseppe, as he conveyed home his happy wife in a neat covered carriage to the farm, was moved to whisper in her ear—"I will not swear sweet one, that thine eyes may not have lost a sparkle of their lustre, or thy cheek a tinge of youthful bloom since first I sought thee in marriage of thy father; but this I know, that I had never been happy in gaining thy affection, or in placing implicit confidence in thee as my wife, had it not been for the strange adventures and repentances attached to the fête of Rocca Bianca and the Tarantata of Cotracastro!"

NOW OR NEVER.

NOW OR NEVER.

It afforded a topic for endless discussion to the narrow circle of High Dutch nobility which furnished courtiers and sycophants to a certain northern prince of the empire, (whom, for distinction and discretion sake, we will style Duke of Saxe-Rothenheim,) when his Serene Highness's Master of the Horse thought fit to dispatch his only son into the Duchy of Brunswick, for the completion of his education.

Instead of following the custom of the country, and retaining Count Emerich within reach of his lady mother the Countess's apron-string at Schloss Edelstein, during the summer months; or, imprisoning him in one of the gloomy apartments of his Teutonic palace at Rothenheim, during the winter, under the nominal tutorage of a household pedagogue; it was Count Edelstein's pleasure to submit his son and heir to the discipline of the humble pastor of the obscure village of

Eichwald, a few leagues distant from the city of Brunswick. Nay, instead of recalling him to the court of Rothenheim and the memory of its prince by frequent visits to his family, Emerich was permitted to quit the Presbytery during one month only of the twelve, and that in the autumn season, when Count Edelstein was enjoying his annual relaxation from the duties of his appointment, at a favourite hunting-seat on the banks of the Oder. It was plain that, whatever else the gallant Master of the Horse might intend to make of his son, he entertained no purpose of rendering him a courtier.

Did such an instance of dereliction from the habits of the place occur in the humdrum Duchy of Saxe-Rothenheim at the present moment, the innovator would doubtless incur the suspicions of his caste, as a liberal in politics, or a freethinker in religion. But, during those latter days of the seventeenth century we are describing, a Saxon *Durchlaucht* ran greater risk of being denounced as a Cabalist or Rosicrucian than as an enemy of church or state.

Voltaire, Beaumarchais, and the Encyclopedists, had not then brandished the flaming sword of irony at the gates of Paradise; and the gossips of Rothenheim, in the utmost vehemence of their strictures upon the proceedings of Count Edelstein, made him accountable for no greater

sin than that of inspiring his future representative with principles and prejudices of Anti-Saxon tendency. They had not a word to hint against Eichwald or its ways, but they conceived that the heir of Schloss Edelstein might have picked up a sprinkling of Greek and Latin nearer home. In the remote Presbytery of the Lutheran pastor he could not but become a boor, a votary of Brunswick beer, and pompernickel—*enfin*—" *que diable allait-il faire dans cette galère ?*"

Among the noble personages of the court of Rothenheim by whom this query was in secret most frequently hazarded, was the gentle, undemonstrative, Saxon-haired, Saxon-hearted, mother of Count Emerich. But, if so wedded to the customs of her country as to find matter for dismay in the foreign education of her son, the Countess was also sufficiently endowed with the national virtues of her sex to exhibit implicit obedience to the will of her husband.

It was hard, indeed, to be estranged from the society of her only child. But Edelstein was not a man to be trifled with. The humblest and most submissive of courtiers, within the sanctuary of his domestic circle he was despotic as a Turk; and the Countess, as she imprinted a fervent kiss upon Emerich's fair forehead on his first departure from home, did not even venture to express her sympathy in his regrets at quitting the fa-

miliar scenes of his boyhood. If she redoubled her prayers that the youth might survive to return to her and grow up to manhood an honour to his generation and a blessing to her old age, the earnestness of the gentle lady's aspirations remained a secret between Heaven and a mother's heart.

The young exile, meanwhile, found little enough under the roof of the pastor of Eichwald to obliterate his recollections of the lofty grandeur of Schloss Edelstein, or of the homage and attendance of which its young heir was the chief object. The Presbytery was a rambling, ill-distributed dwelling house, situated on the outskirts of a village so low and so depressed in its construction, that (like the post-waggons, which occasionally traversed its dreary ways, buried up to the nave of their wheels in loose and shifting sand,) it appeared to have sunk deep into the arid soil. An avenue of silver-stemmed white poplars formed a sort of landmark and approach from the vast corn-fields covering the wide-spreading plain; and, had it not been that, at the distance of a quarter of a league from the house, flourished one of those virgin forests of ancient oaks occasionally to be met with in Northern Germany, not a trace of sylvan beauty or an adjunct to rural enjoyment would have presented itself to soothe the discontent of the young Saxon. Even

the common joys of life seemed more scantily distributed at Eichwald than elsewhere.

Old Armfeldt, the appointed tutor, was a cold, reserved man, almost as dry as the sandy soil out of which he might be supposed to have arisen; while his worthy wife, a diligent knitter of lambs-wool and stewer of prunes and pears, fulfilled in these avocations the chief duties of a motherly, matronly Brunswicker, unconscious that the world afforded higher pleasures or heavier obligations.

Emerich did not pass four-and-twenty hours under their monotonous roof, without twice as many times protesting against the absurd caprice of his father in condemning him to adopt the homeliness of its habits; nor did even the society of the Fraulein Helena, his tutor's only daughter, hold forth much promise of companionship or recreation. She was in the first place two years older than himself, demure as a nun, and unremittingly employed in thrifty reparation of the household and canonical linen of the Presbytery. Count Emerich soon began to class her with the rest of the old-fashioned furniture of the place, and to treat her with as little ceremony as one of his tutor's high-backed ebony chairs. Nay, when, on his return from his first annual visit to Saxe-Rothenheim, the Countess his mother entrusted him with a massive golden cross to be

presented in her name to Helena Armfeldt, in token of gratitude for the kindness of her parents towards their pupil, Emerich was so little interested in the donation as to leave it behind, ensconced among his hunting accoutrements at Edelstein.

All this might be natural enough, so long as the surplice-darning damsel was sixteen years of age, and the Count a headstrong lawless lad of fourteen; but before the expiration of another twelvemonth things had taken a different turn. On Emerich's second visit to the Saxon castle, his father took occasion to reproach him in such harsh terms with undue attention to the charms of his tutor's daughter, as well as to interdict, under such severe penalties all future intimacy between them, that, upon returning to Eichwald, the idle pupil of Jacob Armfeldt began, for the first time, to busy himself in investigating the merits and attractions of Helena.

The forbidden fruit already gained a considerable portion of his attention. Nor were his researches infructuous. Emerich soon ascertained that the tresses habitually hidden under her nun-like veil of snowy cambric were bright and glossy as the delicate flax of Magdeburg; and that the eyes, usually downcast upon her work, could be animated to the utmost vivacity of girlish coquetry. The tight sleeve of her velvet boddice

betrayed the outline of a well-shaped arm, terminating in a hand of taper form and dazzling whiteness; nor did the little foot of the fair Brunswicker leave so much as a fairy-print upon the green moss of the old oak forest, over which she rambled merrily on the autumnal mornings, collecting acorns for the little menagerie of squirrels, which afforded the sole diversion of her uneventful life at Eichwald.

But if Emerich felt surprised by these discoveries and eager to turn them to account, the pretty Fraulein seemed fully prepared for such a *dénouement*. Far from receiving with wonder or humility the attentions of which she now became the object, she amused herself with rallying her new adorer upon his protracted blindness and former discourtesies. Every syllable breathed by the Count in illustration of his growing passion was answered by Helena with fits of inextinguishable laughter. Even the Master of His Serene Highness the Prince of Saxe-Rothenheim's Horse, could he have been an unseen spectator of the wooing of his son, would have admitted that the filial rebellion of Emerich threatened no future pollution to the pure blood of the Edelsteins; and that there was little danger of the plebeian name of Armfeldt being conjugally engrafted upon the tree of his flourishing genealogy.

None, however, but an ear or eye-witness was likely to yield credence to the fact that the suit of a young nobleman of Count Emerich's prospects in life afforded mere matter of jest to the portionless daughter of a village pastor; and it is not to be wondered at that the old Count, moved by Armfeldt's private representations of the excited state of his pupil's affection, should have suddenly recalled him from Brunswick, and forced upon his acceptance the appointment of page in the establishment of the Duke their master.

And now it was poor Emerich's turn to bestow as tender a regret upon the sandy deserts of Eichwald as ever he had lavished upon the more dignified haunts of Schloss Edelstein. In the antechambers of the palace of Rothenheim, amid trophies of arms and hangings of Arras, his thoughts were constantly reverting to the low chamber of worm-eaten wainscot, where Helena sat at her work, with the garden flowers gadding in at the open window, as if to play the spy upon her maidenly industry.

Helena's joyous eyes seemed ever glancing upon him; Helena's heartful happy accents ever ringing in his ears; those accents which, though simple in their attunement, were pure from all contamination of the rustic dialect. It was enough that, among the bejewelled and beplumed beauties of the court of Rothenheim, none rivalled the native

elegance of the pastor's daughter; none boasted a lighter foot, a fairer hand, a more high-bred brow, than the humble little housewife of Eichwald.

And soon this tenderness of retrospection was enhanced by a still holier sympathy. A letter from old Jacob acquainted his pupil and his pupil's father that the helpmeet of his old age had been gathered to her native sands; and, although the worthy woman's tenderness towards her daughter had been displayed during her lifetime in a somewhat lukewarm degree, even for the phlegmatic nature of a Brunswicker, there was something so sacred, so scriptural, so patriarchal, in the phrase by which the venerable Jacob announced his loss, and mourned for the Leah of his early servitude, his heart-companion of forty years that Emerich could not but extend his compassion from the bereaved husband to the motherless child.

Besides, however circumscribed in mind or affections, the departed was at least a woman, and of a nature more congenial with Helena's than that of her surviving parent; for poor old Armfeldt might have withered out the remnant of his days amid the dust of the Ptolemies in the Great Pyramid, without any external demonstration of life or liveliness to disquiet the slumber of the surrounding mummies.

And what was to become of Helena, consigned to perpetual companionship with such a man!—she, who was so much better fitted to enjoy and adorn the gay festivals of the court of Saxe-Rothenheim—she, whom Emerich would so gladly have aided in transplanting to that more congenial sphere!

Scanty, however, was the time allotted him to ponder over these things. His duties in the prince's household, his attendance on the prince's hunting-parties, his participation in the prince's *fêtes* already formed a fatal interruption to his solitary musings. His father, too, was apt to intrude into the sanctuary of his apartment, and cast a jealous eye of paternal scrutiny upon its arrangements; and often, when poor Emerich had been pouring forth his sentiments in a letter to Helena, or his sorrows in a sonnet to the moon, he was compelled by Count Edelstein's sudden approach to consign both prose and verse to the embers of a huge Silesian stove which adorned his chamber, to secure them from the inquisition of the iron-hearted Master of the Horse. The boy-lover sighed, moaned, and even wept in secret; but all this caution and all this condensation of feeling served only to render more intense the hidden flame within his heart.

Was it calculation, therefore, or miscalculation, on the part of the Count, when, in the course of

the first autumn passed with his son in the comparative seclusion of Schloss Edelstein, he contrived, by the intervention of his lady wife, to wring from Emerich the secret of his soul, the mystery of his troth-plight to Helena Armfeldt? —Alas! who can presume to calculate upon the calculations of a courtier of sixty years' experience, an *intrigant* of half a century's dexterity; even though assisted in the operation by intelligence of Edelstein's subsequent concessions, concessions wholly anticipated by his son! Instead of meeting Emerich's admission of disobedience with threats and menaces, instead of raging and storming at the announcement of such signal rebellion against his authority, the Count simply exacted a promise that, till the following year, (when the pastor's daughter would attain her majority, and the pastor's daughter's lover complete his nineteenth year,) Emerich should hazard no attempt to revisit Eichwald, but address himself to the fulfillment of his duties at court, and to the enjoyment of the gaieties of the city.

Not so much as an interdiction was laid upon a correspondence between the young people; nor did a syllable of disparagement fall from the lips of the Count respecting either Helena or her father. With exemplary magnanimity, he at once imputed to his own parental shortsightedness the misfortune of Emerich's misplaced attachment.

The grateful heir-apparent of Schloss Edelstein and its honours could do no less than reward its master's forbearance by the most implicit compliance with these conditions. No sooner, therefore, was the family re-installed for the winter at the Residenz, than it was noticed by the courtiers of the Duke that they had acquired an active and alarming rival in the younger Edelstein. Earliest and latest in the ante-chambers of His Serene Highness, the prince could not form a wish but it was fulfilled by the assiduous and enterprizing zeal of his handsome page; and Emerich, who could ride, run, wrestle, shoot at a mark, hunt, hawk, or dance the lavolta, with the best of them, was universally admitted to be, like Sir Lancelot of the Lake, "the curtiest knight that ever bare shielde; and the meekest man and the gentillest, that ever among ladies eate in hall!"

Haunted by happy reminiscences, reassured by blissful hopes, he had not a desire unfulfilled. His father and mother had consented to welcome home Helena Armfeldt as their daughter; Helena had at length pledged herself to become their daughter and the wife of his bosom; wealth, honours, domestic happiness, were before him; how could he be other than the lightest-hearted of mortal men?

Now, there is something in the intoxication of joy almost as dangerous in its results as any

other species of inebriety. Emerich was, in fact no longer master of himself. Resigned to the domination of a master-passion, he seemed to consider all his proceedings sanctified, all his follies privileged—like the nobles of the chivalrous court of Spain, of the olden time, who, on confessing their enthralment in amorous bondage, were permitted to wear their hats in presence of their sovereign, on the supposition of being all-engrossed by the thought of their liege lady and mistress. A thousand indiscretions, a thousand inconsistencies, betrayed the pre-occupation of Emerich's mind.

Even in His Serene Highness's presence, he was often heard to break forth into wild hilarity of speech and gesture, wholly unbecoming the time and place; on one occasion, he was said to have addressed the grave High Chancellor of the Duchy as his "best and fairest Helena;" nay—there were persons at court malicious enough to insinuate that the young Count had been even known to lavish the same familiar terms of endearment upon a certain Countess Waldenfeld, the loveliest lady of Saxe-Rothenheim.

Yet every thing prospered with him. The more uncourtly his demeanour, the greater his favour at court. The Duke, weary, perhaps, of the sycophantic and monotonous humility of his household, seemed to take delight in the aberrations of his favourite page, and would tap him on the

shoulder, or pull him facetiously by the ear, in guerdon of his manifold infractions of the laws of Saxon etiquette. Why, even the High Chancellor himself, with his grizzled beard and furrowed forehead, would willingly have played the buffoon, to be pulled familiarly by the ear by His Serene Highness the Duke of Saxe-Rothenheim!—and, as to Countess Waldenfeld, who had, perhaps, most reason to wax indignant at the antics of the bewildered page—she could do nothing but laugh whenever his indiscretions were pointed out to her reprobation.

The young Countess might possibly be aware that frowns appeared to sit uneasily upon her lovely countenance; for, even during the mourning year of her widowhood, (a period from which she had just emerged on Emerich's arrival from Eichwald,) she had been taxed with displaying a less gloomy frame of feature than is held to be accordant with the sable hood and wimple.

It is true the lord she had lost was somewhat of the oldest and ugliest to have boasted the possession of so fair a bride. But then his age and ugliness had rendered her an object of general commiseration at the court of Rothenheim. Even his Serene Highness the Duke had not withheld his sympathy from the miseries of her social position; and, of the whole court, Emerich von Edelstein was alone ignorant of the extent to

which His Highness's sympathy was supposed to have been carried. He had in fact been busy squirrel-snaring for Helena Armfeldt among the oaks of Eichwald, during the period of Countess Waldenfeld's afflictions and of the consolation administered by her sovereign prince.

The lady was still but in her five-and-twentieth year; tall, beautiful, graceful, accomplished; a delicate musician, mistress of several languages, dancing like a wood-nymph, and singing with the fascination of the Rhenish *Lureley;* and it was but natural that, when a creature thus bright and thus gifted condescended to bend her smiles upon a mere page of the household, the page should requite her graciousness with his unbounded gratitude. Countess Waldenfeld soon became the confidante of Emerich's tender passion, of his happy prospects; and, if any thing could exceed the lady's admiration of his *naïveté*, it was her wonderment at the disinterestedness of the noble Master of the Horse, whom her experience had hitherto pointed out as the basest and most venal of courtiers. She espied a mystery in the business, (a mystery which is so piquant a thing to a satiated woman of the world,) and, in addition to the pleasure hitherto afforded her by Emerich's frank and graceful homage, she now began to court his society for mischief's sake, for the sake of fathoming old Edelstein's designs and discom-

fiting his manœuvres. No pains, no arts, were spared to allure the fascinated boy to her house. He was her constant partner in the dance, her frequent cavalier in the princely hawking parties. Scarcely a day passed without their meeting. But, when she did not see him, she wrote to him; and her perfumed billets again and again assured the captivated page that, when she was not writing to him, she thought and dreamt of him alone. To be written to and dreamed of by so beautiful and accomplished a being as Countess Waldenfeld was certainly enough to turn a head of nineteen, already somewhat wanting in equipoise.

His gentle mother was the first to discern his infatuation. "Beware of that woman," she had whispered one day, while bestowing her benediction upon him previously to his departure with one of the grand hunting-trains of the prince. "Beware of her, for her heart is hollow, and her friendship will lead to evil." But how to beware of an enchantress of five-and-twenty, with a skin as smooth as alabaster, tresses of the hue and glossiness of the raven's feather, and a smile that might have created a soul under the iron ribs of old Jacob Armfeldt of Eichwald!

Countess Edelstein even judged it necessary to extend the expression of her surmises and apprehensions to her husband; and, during the absence of the page and the court on the aforesaid

partie de chasse (from which the Master of the Horse was surprised to see himself for the first time excluded) she set forth her maternal anxieties in terms so touching and convincing that, on his return home, Emerich encountered his father pacing his own particular chamber, in the most wrathful excitement of mind and body. But the time for warning was over: and, had not the Count been absorbed by the fervour of his fury, he would at once have discerned an accusing consciousness in the young man's countenance—a certain recklessness indicative of mingled triumph and remorse, calculated to apprize him that his expostulations came too late.

The explanation between the son and father was intemperate on both sides, and mutually painful. Emerich had to learn that he had been betrayed into infidelity towards his plighted wife, by the arts of the neglected mistress of the prince; and Edelstein, in the vehemence of his rage, was tempted into the admission of twice as much as he intended to disclose; raving against the folly, the idiotism, the madness, of his son's infatuation, as if upon the accomplishment of his union with Helena Armfeldt depended all the advancement of his fortunes, as well as all the happiness of his life. But, although these insinuations were incomprehensible to Emerich, the accompanying

injunctions laid upon him were intelligible enough: that he was instantly to quit Rothenheim, repair to Eichwald, and accelerate by every means in his power the period of his marriage with the pastor's daughter.

To fly from the presence of the woman of whose unworthiness his exasperated father had afforded him incontrovertible proofs, and who was now the object of his contempt, was an easy task. But, Helena!—to approach the pure presence of the unsuspecting Helena, contaminated by the recent endearments of a wanton!—his soul rebelled against such sacrilege; more especially while his father laboured to impress upon his mind that to complete his engagements with the object of his early attachment was to appropriate to himself a mysterious but overflowing source of worldly prosperity. He did not, indeed, as yet apprehend that the Count's former interdictions had been designed to stimulate his boyish obstinacy into opposition; it was enough for him to learn with amazement that, but for the remote chance of his alliance with Helena Armfeldt, he had never beheld the white walls of the Presbytery of Eichwald.

If any thing, meanwhile, could augment the conscience-stricken penitence of the faithless one it was the frank cordiality with which he was

welcomed back by his affianced bride. There was an alteration, indeed, in her demeanour towards him. During his absence, all her former spirit of coquetry and scorn seemed to have forsaken her; she was gentleness and humility itself: and, even when he sat in her presence, embarrassed and abashed, studying for words in which, in spite of his father's prohibition, to embody the confession of his faults, she appeared to discern no cause for mirth in the awkwardness of her trembling lover. She was surprised to see the courtly page grown so timid, so reserved; but, instead of seeking to add to his embarrassment, Helena took up one of her inimitable specimens of housewifery, and waited patiently an explanation of his unlooked for return.

"Emerich!" said she, at length, looking up from her work, and bending her sunny eyes inquiringly upon his face, when she found that his difficulty in addressing her increased rather than diminished—"something disastrous has surely befallen you; for it is not thus we should meet, after what has chanced since we parted. You cannot fear to bestow your confidence upon your old playmate, your old friend?—Speak, dearest, forget all other ties that may have been projected between us: look upon me only as the most attached and indulgent of sisters. Speak, Emerich, and set my heart at rest!"

And, thus encouraged, Emerich *did* speak; but not alas! to "set the maiden's heart at rest." He spoke to acquaint her that, although his father was all eagerness for the immediate solemnization of their nuptials, it was now his turn to sue for delay:—

"I know myself to be doubly unworthy of the happiness in store for me," he exclaimed; "nor will I pretend to your hand till I have earned the gift by the expiation of many a repentant month, affording renewed proofs of devotedness and love. My father has urged me to deceive you; to accept your confiding trust in my honour. But, this must not be, Helena!—Even at the risk of forfeiting your precious tenderness, NOW OR NEVER will I avow the miserable truth, that absence, which has diminished nothing of my admiration, has betrayed me into the vilest of shames. Yes! dearest—I have loved another. Another hand has been pressed in mine; other smiles have constituted my happiness; other———"

"Not another word!" cried Helena, shuddering and turning deadly pale. "I, who have sacrificed so much for your sake, who *would* have sacrificed my very heart's peace, my very life-blood—I have not courage to listen to the confession of this black ingratitude!"

"I have deserved my sentence!" faltered Emerich.

"And such, then, is the stability of human affections!" cried Helena, wringing her hands, and apparently unconscious of his presence. "And his father, too, the scion of a feudal line, a magnate of the empire, a noble of Saxony—his father, to whom was known the secret of my birth, of my claims—to have prompted him to deceit and fraud, for the furtherance of his own base projects!"

"You wrong him, Helena," cried the page. "Revile *me* as you will, for I, indeed, am an offender. But how, I beseech you, are the *interests* of Count Edelstein to be advanced by the union of his heir with the daughter of a village pastor?"

"*You*, at least, thank Heaven! are innocent of participation in his schemes!" exclaimed Helena Armfeldt, with bitterness. "*You* know not that illustrious blood is flowing in my veins; you know me not as the daughter of a sovereign prince. *You* know not that a few short months will endow me with claims upon the reigning Duke of Brunswick, such as might tempt even the ambition of a noble of Saxony;—nay!—that the laws of the Duchy, as a fief of the Empire, alone exclude me from the throne!"

"As Heaven hears and judges me," cried Emerich, "this is my first indication of these mysteries; nor am I yet assured but that you are practising on my credulity!"

"Your father, (long years ago representative of Saxe-Rothenheim at the court of Brunswick,)" resumed Helena, "was the only depositary of young Duke William's secret, when, during the lifetime of his father, he gave his hand clandestinely to the daughter of Count Rechberg. Time, they trusted, would afford some auspicious occasion for the disclosure of this rash marriage. But, within a few short months, my father fell upon the field of Lutzen; my mother survived but till my ill-starred birth: when Edelstein, sole confidant of the event, removed me hither to be reared in humbleness and obscurity, as the avowed offspring of the pastor of Eichwald. Even Armfeldt and his wife were kept in ignorance of my real condition, and attributed my origin to him who, for his own sordid views, had hired their protection for my infancy. Nor was it till the death of my foster-mother that I became accidentally placed in possession of a sealed packet, the bequest of my dying mother, acquainting me with the secret of my origin."

Helena paused for breath; while Emerich, humiliated by the consciousness of having been rendered the instrument of his father's machinations, drew towards the open window to conceal his emotions.

"And what was my first impulse on the discovery?" pursued his companion. "Joy, Emerich!—*joy!*—at the discovery that I was in truth

the equal of one who had generously stooped to my supposed indigence; joy in the belief that I was about to augment his dignities and confirm his future fortune! But, soon, alas! reflection convinced me that, once acknowledged as a princess of the house of Brunswick, my hand would be destined to some prince of the empire, and my heart severed from its early affections. Emerich, I did not hesitate.—Having forwarded to the investigation of the Duke, my kinsman, those proofs of my legitimacy which endowed me with unanswerable claims upon his protection, I at once abjured my rights, my title, inheritance; proclaiming myself, with delight and pride, the affianced and contented wife of Count Emerich of Edelstein!"

"Helena," involuntarily exclaimed the page—

"Tell this to your father!" she continued, gasping with emotion. "Tell it him as a sufficient consolation for the intelligence that his projects have crumbled into dust; that the orphan of William of Brunswick rejects the alliance of his son; that Helena Armfeldt is about to seek, where worldly ambitions prevail not, a compensation for her blighted affections, a solace for her wounded spirit. Return, therefore, to Saxe-Rothenheim—return to her for whom you forsook me;—the same roof must shelter us no longer!"

Vain were the attestations, vain the intreaties, of the young Count; who, by the Princess of Brunswick's noble relinquishment of her rights, felt himself released from all suspicion of interested motives in the renewal of his suit. His mere presence appeared to be a source of torture to one, who, reared in seclusion and pure from the contamination of the world, had risked her hopes of happiness upon his fidelity, and, "having forfeited all by the wreck of that frail bark," was now utterly heart-broken.

The only remission he could obtain of his sentence of exile was Helena's reluctant consent that, at the expiration of six months, he should return to Eichwald, once more to plead his cause, and ascertain what miracle solitude and abandonment might have wrought in his favour. And, on his arrival at Saxe-Rothenheim, the discomfited Master of the Horse did not fail to anticipate wonders from the result of this apparently slight concession.

"Courage, my son!" whispered his compassionate mother, after listening to the first ebullitions of poor Emerich's despondency; "it is not in the heart of woman to be thus bitterly estranged by a first offence."

"Courage, my boy!" rejoined his father; "Helena of Brunswick will yet be yours; and, once wedded as your wife, trust to *my* efforts

to secure the re-establishment of her birthright."

But the regret of Emerich dwelt neither upon Helena of Brunswick, nor upon her birthright. The object of his love was Helena Armfeldt, the poor, the noble, the high-souled, the tender and true companion of his unsullied years. It was no princess of the empire, but the pastor's daughter, at whose feet he hastened to throw himself, at the expiration of his period of banishment.

But, when he arrived at Eichwald, his old tutor was alone, wifeless, childless, comfortless; and all that remained of the betrothed of Emerich of Edelstein was a white tablet standing ghastly and alone in a secluded nook of the sandy grave-yard of the Presbytery, inscribed with the humble name of "HELENA!" A single shaft from the overflowing quiver of human afflictions had released the true-hearted village maiden from a world of probation.

VICTORIA.

VICTORIA;

OR

THE SICILIAN VESPERS.

THERE is not a more beautiful valley throughout the favoured islands of Sicily than that of Chiara Fontana, situated about four leagues from Palermo, beyond Monte Reale. Bounded on one side by rocky acclivities, and on the other by a slope richly wooded with groves of ancient chestnuts; the fertility of its pastures, surrounded by hedges of the aloe and Indian fig; the silvery hue of its oliveyards; the deeper verdure of its plantations of ilex, tamarisk, palmetto, and mastic trees, combine to form a landscape so varied and so exquisite, that not even the murmuring Sicilians were surprised, when, towards the middle of the thirteenth century, it was selected by Jean, Comte de St. Remy, chief judge of Palermo, during the usurpation of Charles of Anjou, for the site of his summer palace.

Although the anarchy prevalent during the reigns of Manfred and his successor had compelled the native Sicilian barons to retire to their strongholds among the mountains, or to construct forts and outposts to protect their estates against the encroachments of the Angevine prince and his delegates, so self-secure was St. Remy, and so confirmed in his habits of despotism by long and undisturbed domination over the chief city of the island, that he disdained to surround his own dwelling with the warlike defences rendered indispensible to others by the ferocious nature of his government

His authority in Palermo was unlimited. Not a voice presumed to uplift itself against the representative of the powerful sovereign of the Two Sicilies, who was at once a senator of Rome, and, under the immediate protection of the papal see, imperial vicar of Tuscany. Charles of Anjou, brother to the venerated St. Louis, was in fact regarded as expressly delegated by Pope Nicholas III, and the Comte de St. Remy as expressly delegated by Charles of Anjou.

The highest tribunals, both secular and ecclesiastical, were submitted to his authority; the dungeons of Palermo unfolded their massive gates at his bidding; and the headsman and the axe waited only his sentence of condemnation. The Palermitans trembled at the mere aspect of their judge,

while the villagers of the adjoining districts avoided the very mention of his name, as that of the incarnation of some evil spirit—an engine of the retributive justice of the Almighty.

Thus powerful, and thus powerfully upheld by the patient submission of his victims, the count naturally disdained all aid of ramparts or bastions, moat or glacis, in defence of the lovely spot wherein he purposed to set up his rest during the summer season. Groves of orange and lemon trees, vine-clad trellises, and bowers of oriental roses, surrounded the château. The broad leaves of the lotus floated upon its marble tanks; and the towering reeds of the papyrus threw up many a cluster of flowers from the channel of the stream whose tranquil waters glided through the rich domain.

It is true the building was flanked by two lateral towers, so arranged as to form a retreat, in any emergency, for the family resident at Chiara Fontana. But the central elevation of the château was modelled after that of St. Remy, on the banks of the Loire, and assimilated far better with a land of corn-fields and vineyards than with a sequestered valley, overshadowed by the craggy summit of Monte Pelegrino. By the peasantry, however, to whom cultivated gardens were a novelty, the structure was regarded as secondary in magnificence only to that of the Madre Chiesa of Paler-

mo ; and had any but Jean de St. Remy, the sanguinary judge, presided over its creation, they would have named it—as its ruins are named in our own times—*Il Castellino beato.*

Scarcely had the groves of acacia and pomegranate trees risen to a sufficient height to cast their shadow over the marble terraces extending one below the other, to facilitate the descent from the château to the vale below, when early in the spring of the year 1282, an inmate thrice worthy of its manifold beauties took possession of the place. Of so limited and jealous a nature, however, was the intercourse between the French domestics of St. Remy and the humbler inhabitants of the valley, that for some time it remained matter of doubt to the peasantry of Chiara Fontana whether the new comer, the gentle lady Eudoxia, were wife or daughter to their dreaded lord ; and once or twice, when the fair stranger extended her wanderings beyond the trellised walks into the neighbouring groves, where the villagers were gathering their annual harvest of almonds and pistachio-nuts, she was hesitatingly saluted by them as she passed—"*Padrona Contessa!*"

They could not refrain indeed, while they watched the footsteps of the stranger wandering beside the beautiful fountain that gave its name to the valley, from raising their hands and eyes to heaven in pity that one so fair and mild-featured should

be allied to the lion of Palermo; marvelling sorely that the count, who in former summers had been accustomed to pass weeks and months in the shady recesses of Chiara Fontana, now appeared among them no more.

Instead of the carousals of the Angevine captains which had been wont to echo in the banqueting halls of the château, nothing was now heard but the rock-spring trickling from its encrusted walls into the marble font destined to cool the flasks and flagons for the feast of its lord. Instead of troops of pacing mules enlivening the avenues with their rich caparisons, the listless footsteps of Eudoxia's bower-maiden, or of her favourite page bearing her falcon on his wrist, alone resounded through the deserted corridors. The gardens and their blossoms were brighter than ever; the fountains threw up their silvery threads as if enamoured of the task; and the musk-antelopes and oriental birds, tendered in tribute to the rapacious judge of Palermo by the traders of the Levant, were already tamed into contented domestication in its golden aviaries:

All Paradise seem'd open'd in the wild.

But St. Remy, as if painfully conscious of the discrepancy between scenes of such soft amenity

and the ruggedness of his own nature, contented himself during the fervours of summer with a retreat in the Kubba, a gloomy palace of Moorish origin, situated near Palermo, in the far-famed valley of the Conca d'Oro.

It was at length opined among the peasants that the lovely lady, whose sojourn at Chiara Fontana thus afforded a sentence of exile to their lord, could be neither wife nor mistress to the count. She was probably a daughter, an offending daughter; and they accordingly contented themselves with modifying their former salutation, whenever they encountered her by the way, into "*Servo lei, Padrona Contessina.*" To this courtesy, as to their first, Eudoxia replied by a silent smile, as soft and summer-like indeed as the atmosphere of the meads of Hybla, but apparently with so little discernment of the change, that the herdsmen and shepherds of the valley began to suspect the lovely Angevine of being still uninitiated into the mellifluous dialect of their happy island.

The tenderness of a gentle nature beamed, however, from her eyes; and tears often mingled with her caresses when she paused in the valley to raise in her arms the young peasant children loitering behind their parents to gaze upon her rich attire; and by degrees her sins were forgiven her

of wearing the hated habit, and shaping her thoughts and words in the detested language, of the French.

But, ere the mysteries of her presence and the absence of the count were half cleared up, the celebration of the festival of Easter summoned the baron Manfredi Chiaro Montano to Carini, (an hereditary fortress situated on the mountain-side about half a league from the château,) and gave a new turn to their conjectures.

The ushers and men-at-arms of Manfredi were accustomed to mingle familiarly with the inhabitants of the vale; and Randolfo, seneschal of the fortress, was brother-in-law and the frequent guest of Cipriano of Chiara Fontana, proprietor of the largest almond-orchard of the district. By this chain of communication the rumours of Palermo at length found their way into the wild; and the villagers now learnt with amazement and compassion that the fair Eudoxia was by birth a Greek, and that her father, governor of Candia under the authority of Michael Paleologus, had been massacred in the late campaign of Charles of Anjou.

"A captive! a Greek captive!" cried Cipriano's wife, old Orsola, to her brother Randolfo, who whispered this wondrous intelligence while sharing their paschal feast. "It cannot be! The lady Eudoxia has neither chains upon her arms

nor a veil upon her brows, after the fashion of the maidens of Byzantium."

"I tell thee," persisted the trusty seneschal, waxing wroth at the scepticism of his sister, "that 't is now four years since the damsel was first landed, among other noble prisoners from the East, on the quay of Palermo; and, though she had scarcely emerged from the season of girlhood, already the hopes of the enslaved Greeks rested upon her influence; for the valiant captain, Guillaume de St. Remy, by whom she had been rescued from the hands of the slaughterers of her race, was himself a captive to her charms, and intent upon winning her heart to become his bride, and her mind to espouse the tenets of the church of Rome."

"St. Rosalia be gracious!" cried Monna Orsola, suspending the labours of her spindle as she listened. "As if aught but a miracle could move the iron-hearted count to receive a dowerless heretic as his daughter-in-law!"

"Nevertheless," resumed the vassal of Manfredi, "Count Guillaume had at least the art to suspend the interdiction of his father. On threat of joining the standard of the emperor, should any dishonour or discourtesy be practised against his captive, he obtained leave to place her for a season in the holy house of Santa Chiara of Palermo, on condition that if within four years'

space he achieved by prowess and feat of arms the honour of knighthood, and obtained at the hands of the king the royal sanction to his marriage, the lady Eudoxia should have free choice to become his wife, or return unransomed to the country of her forefathers."

"And she hesitated?" interrupted the old woman. "Out upon her!"

"Her discretion has never yet been taxed for a decision," replied Randolfo, in a tone of grave reproof. "This very spring, the period of probation having expired, the maiden was claimed of the convent by the chief judge; as if, by rendering her an inmate in his dwelling, to form a juster estimate of her merits. But Guillaume de St. Remy is still away, nor for months past have tidings of his welfare reached Palermo."

"He has at least achieved the golden spurs of knighthood?" inquired Cipriano, who, having himself borne arms in the cause of the unfortunate Conradin, found his old heart warm at a tale of love and chivalry.

"Who doubts it?" ejaculated the seneschal; "who in all Sicily doubts it? The youth was of honour and valour past impugnment. And, moreover, the house of St. Remy boasts, by fair means or foul, an all-potent influence with the tyrant of Naples."

"But what can detain the young count from his plighted love?" mused the perplexed Orsola.

"Naught is of a surety known," cried Randolfo. "Many in Palermo assert that he is seeking brighter laurels at the court of Philip the Bold; and many believe that he has been dispatched by King Charles on a secret mission into Spain, to watch over the dispositions of Arragon towards the recovery of the throne of Manfred."

"Some notion glimmers in my mind," muttered Orsola, "that an especial tie of friendship once existed between the honoured house of Manfredi and this same campaigning youngster, this whelp of the lion of Palermo—nay, I now distinctly remember that when Fabrizio, the olive-merchant, returned from the feast of St. Rosalia, in the year of grace when the Neapolitan fleet sailed against the armament of the Bosphorus, he brought back news to the valley that, at the royal banquet, the lady Victoria of Chiaro Montano sat beside Count Guillaume de St. Remy, and that the whole city was busy with tales of love-passages betwixt them."

"The city was busy with the prattling of women and fools!" exclaimed the seneschal; "and if thy memory serve thee no better, sister, than to preserve such idle scandals, I pray

thee keep them to thyself; more especially since the gentle lady Victoria expresses an intention to visit the fountain of the valley one of these summer mornings, and thinks to rest her palfrey in the pastures of Cipriano, and her noble self under shelter of thy roof."

"Santa Lucia of Syracuse!" cried Cipriano, more astounded than flattered by the announcement; "how will a lady of such pride and precedence content herself with the homestead of a poor almond-grower!"

"No matter!" rejoined Randolfo; "my noble mistress is all graciousness; and the woman's whim that brings her hither will suffice to gild over thy beechen bowls and tabourets of straw. Be content. It is her will to come. Welcome her without ceremony, and thou wilt lose nothing by the concession."

Nor was time afforded for either deliberation or preparation. On Easter Monday, the very day following Randolfo's visit, the lady Victoria herself, enwrapped in a mantle of light silk and shaded by a pilgrim's hat of Tuscany, stood within the gate of the almond-orchard. But it was neither the courtesies of Orsola, nor even the pellucid waters of the fountain, with its fairy islands of floating lotus-flowers, that drew her to Chiara Fontana. Her secret errand was with the fair Byzantine stranger; and, having

learned from Cipriano and his dame that the lady of the château was accustomed to beguile the hours of evening sunshine in a thick grove of carob and mulberry trees adjoining the gardens, the daughter of Manfredi set forth under their proffered guidance, and soon arrived on the confines of a flowery glade, encompassed by thickets of myrtle and oleander and the lofty plants of the palma christi.

"And this is the favourite haunt of the Greek maiden!—and I shall soon be in her presence!" murmured the high-souled Victoria to herself, having dismissed her guide and flung aside her mantle. "I am about to look face to face upon the lady of St. Remy's love, the lady whom they call a captive, a victim, an unfortunate, even while they hail her as Count William's bride! But how shall I—a stranger and of the land she loathes—presume to address her?—how win her confidence to my words?—how impress upon her mind the sincerity of my good-will? She will despise, perhaps revile me. But I can bear it! The thought of *him* and of his danger will arm my courage against her displeasure."

Victoria Manfredi, the high-souled but gentle-hearted Victoria, had often been taxed with coldness by the nobles of Palermo, nay even with arrogance by the courtiers and minions of the usurper. Her brow was indeed lofty; her eye

radiant with innate nobleness. But, in entering the presence of Eudoxia, she overlooked not that the maiden of Candia was a captive and a stranger in the land; and, advancing deferentially towards her, lifted and kissed the hem of her garment, after the fashion of the Levant. Thus, ere she uttered a syllable, Eudoxia's gentle heart was propitiated by the graceful bearing of her guest; and, having led her towards the flowery bank from which on her approach she had risen, the lady of the castle motioned to the stranger to take place beside her, as though some invisible influence already revealed to her the sister and the friend.

"And you will not ask me for what purpose I am here?" inquired Victoria at length, raising her expressive eyes from the lute which Eudoxia had laid aside to fix them upon the countenance of her fairer companion. "You imagine, perhaps, that I am instigated by curiosity to look upon the loveliness of which fame speaks so widely, and of which also even the misgivings of my own heart did not magnify the charm?"

"Nay," replied the lady of Chiara Fontana, mechanically drawing forward the drapery which had fallen back from her fair shoulders, and blushing to the roots of her hair under the ardent gaze of her energetic guest; "how can I augur aught but courtesy of one who deigns to visit me in my

solitude, and to grace me with words of kindness?"

"I am daughter to the Manfredi of Chiaro Montano," resumed Victoria, with noble frankness; "and I am aware that I address a lady of birth and breeding equal to my own—of fortunes far more prosperous."

"Dark, then, indeed must be *your* destiny!" cried Eudoxia, clasping her hands; "for I am an orphan and a captive!"

"You are beloved by Guillaume de St. Remy," replied the Sicilian maiden. "You are his betrothed—you will shortly be his wife!—while *I* am one whom his father would have forced on his acceptance, as the cementing seal of alliance between the new and ancient lords of Sicily—one who, having loved him with all the fervour of a heart accustomed from childhood to worship the virtues of a sole and noble object, find myself at length rejected and forgotten."

"Spare me!" interrupted Eudoxia, seeming to shrink into herself. "I have heard of this. But he is away; he may perhaps return no more. Revile me not, gentle lady; I am already too unhappy!"

"Absent or present, in Sicily or a rover, St. Remy loves you," persisted Victoria. "What more can you desire of Heaven! The possession

of a heart like his should be a talisman against the influence of all meaner cares. I am the only aughter of my father's house—my father's house is of the proudest and wealthiest in Sicily—but, to be the chosen one of *his* affections, the heirship of Chiaro Montano were indeed a poor exchange! But it was not of *this* I came to speak," she continued, as if with a painful effort to repress her rising emotions; "nor had I thus boasted of my weakness could less have sufficed to win your credence to the tidings I would disclose—tidings which vitally import the safety of Comte Guillaume."

"The safety of Comte Guillaume?" reiterated the trembling Eudoxia.

"You must be aware," persisted Victoria, "that Charles of Anjou and his satellites are not less hated here in Sicily than among your own most injured countrymen. The very name of St. Remy is a by-word of abhorrence in Palermo. The people shudder at it as that of an oppressor; the nobles despise it as that of a usurper, and none more bitterly than my father, a deep-pledged foe to the ruthless murderer of Conradin. Yet not for this animosity mistrust *my* honesty of purpose. Minstrels and trouveurs have asserted from the olden time till now that deadly and guileful are the resentments of a slighted woman. Believe it not of *me*. No! When Guillaume de St. Remy's

heart inclined gently towards me, his eyes had not lighted upon your beauty. He beheld you—pitied you—adored you—must *I* therefore become his enemy! He is your lover—but he is not less the man I love. Grant me your confidence," continued Victoria, clasping her hands with earnestness; "I open my whole soul to your scrutiny—close not your heart against my prayers!"

"I do not!" said Eudoxia, in a firmer tone, gathering courage, when she saw that tears were stealing down the cheeks of her strange but fascinating guest. "Speak on!—speak on!—you have my amplest trust. What know you of Guillaume?—what fear you for him?—and how may I—may *we*—administer to his welfare?"

"Right!" cried Victoria, involuntarily laying her hand on the shoulder of her companion, as she noted this indication of a graceful acceptance of her friendship: "right!—For now I dare unfold, unfearing of mistrust, the whole secret of my apprehension. Eudoxia! he is at hand!—The absent one returns!—Within a week the galley of St. Remy will anchor in the bay of Palermo—ay, and furnished with a mandate of authority from King Charles to sanctify his marriage."

With difficulty did the Greek maiden suppress, in deference to the feelings of her companion, the

ejaculations of thankfulness and rapture that rose to her lips. "What magic has instructed you in these mysteries?" cried she, trembling with joyful perturbation.

"Even the deadly enmity of my father!" replied Victoria, in a solemn voice; "his triumphant joy in the knowledge that the day of Sicilian vengeance is at hand! Yes lady!—our islanders wait but an appointed signal to seize on their hated tyrants, and give them to the edge of the sword. The destiny of the French despots is decreed; and Manfredi (with resentments of his own to aggravate the consciousness of national degradation) is chiefly apprehensive that Guillaume de St. Remy, their best and bravest, may escape, and hereafter rally the cohorts of the enemy. The conspirators of Palermo look eagerly for his arrival. On *him* have the orations of Giovanni di Procida fixed their apprehensions. His doom is sealed!—and lo! with the eagerness of a bridegroom he rushes into their toils!"

"Great God!—can no warning reach him!" shrieked Eudoxia. "Must he indeed perish! Can none premonish him of his danger?"

"*Yours* must be the task!" exclaimed the daughter of Manfredi. "From me or mine—nay, from any in Sicily save yourself—the intelligence would have a most suspicious aspect."

"But how, oh! how to reach him!" rejoined

Eudoxia. "What but the bird of the air could convey the counsel to his ears?"

"A shallop must be stationed in the outer harbour to hail his arrival," replied Victoria; "and trusty servants of my own would undertake the parley. But we lack a token at your hands in evidence of our trustworthiness—a jewel, a bracelet, a breast-knot, he has seen you wear, such as would avouch ——but hear you nothing?" cried she, suddenly interrupting herself, and assuming the attitude of a listener.

"The pipe of the herdsmen upon the hills." ejaculated Eudoxia, her attention otherwise engrossed.

"Listen! — listen!" cried Victoria, again: "hear you no murmurs on the air?"

"The bees swarming among the orange-blooms," again ejaculated Eudoxia.

"No—no—no—no!" exclaimed the lady of Chiaro Montano. "'Tis the trampling of many feet, and the contending voices of angry men, that murmur in the distance. I hear a shout!—I hear a shriek! So sure as Heaven is above us, the peasants are already in arms, and approaching to invest the dwelling of St. Remy!"

"The tumult reaches me now," faltered the trembling Eudoxia. "God be praised that the hour of peril has at least preceded the arrival of my Guillaume!"

"Have we yet time to reach the château?" inquired Victoria, gazing anxiously around her; "or, having reached it, what shelter does it afford?"

"The tower!—the tower!—let us fly!" cried Eudoxia, rooted by terror to the spot.

"Too late!—they are already at hand!" replied the fair Sicilian, pointing to a body of armed men, who were pursuing the domestics of the castle from terrace to terrace, and making their way towards the fountain.

"My mistress, my gracious mistress!" shouted the voice of Randolfo, who was approaching them through the thicket. "Follow me instantly back to the village. An insurrection has taken place at Monte Reale, and the French lie massacred in all directions. The Palermitans are in arms. A company of the insurgents has marched against the castle to lay waste the property of the tyrant St. Remy, and exterminate his adherents. Follow me back to Cipriano's cottage, or your presence here may involve you in the general ruin."

A scream of agony, followed by a shout of triumph and execration, now reached them from the gardens.

"They come!" faltered Eudoxia, clinging to the robe of her companion.

"Away, woman!" cried Randolfo, forcibly un-

clasping her hands, and striving to extricate his young mistress.

"Save me!—save me!" ejaculated the agonized Eudoxia, again fixing a detaining grasp upon the drapery of Victoria Manfredi.

"Delay not, madam! For the love of God—for the love of your father—quit this place!" cried the old seneschal. "Deeply is the name of Manfredi venerated in Sicily—but what will persuade these desperate men that a daughter of the line they love is to be found consorting with the young Countess of St. Remy!"

And, taking the lady Victoria respectfully, but resolutely, by the arm, the old man attempted to remove her forcibly from the spot, indifferent to the distress of the miserable Eudoxia, who, speechless with alarm, had fallen half insensible on the bank. "Behold! they have fired the château!" he exclaimed, pointing to the smoke that now poured forth from the lower windows. "Will nothing—will *nothing* move you?"

"Leave me Randolfo!" murmured Victoria, rousing herself from the fit of self-concentrated meditation in which she had been absorbed: "my resolution is taken!"

"I am the oldest servant of your father's house," he persisted, throwing himself at her feet: "I witnessed Manfredi's triumph when an heiress was born to Chiaro Montano. Do not

compel me to witness his desolation." And the tears streamed down his cheeks as he raised his clasped and withered hands towards the lady Victoria.

"Leave us, good Randolfo!" said she, in a mild and tranquil voice. And, unclasping a jewel from her dress, "take this to my father," she continued "in token that you served me faithfully to the last, and that I rushed wilfully upon my fate. It may be that for my sake my countrymen will spare this stranger. If not, let Guillaume de St. Remy own, when he returns to mourn over her loss, that the heart which loved him spared not its own best blood to secure his happiness."

"Infatuation!—madness!" shrieked the old man, perceiving that even while she was speaking a group of the insurgents of Palermo had reached the thicket.

"Death to the French!—death to the murderous race of St. Remy!" cried the foremost of the insurgents, brandishing his poniard and rushing towards the spot. "Behold! we have tracked the she-vulture to her nest!" And, seizing Eudoxia by the sleeve, he raised his dagger to plunge it into her bosom.

"Hold!—'tis the daughter of Manfredi of Chiaro Montano!" cried Victoria, rushing between them. "Would you slay the child of your liege-lord?"

"Thou, thou, art the Frenchman's bride!" shouted the infuriated ruffian. And in a moment his stiletto was deep in the bosom of Victoria. In a moment, and in spite of Randolfo's cries, the fainting Eudoxia was borne off in triumph and safety to the village as the daughter of Manfredi; and the old man was left alone and helpless beside his dying mistress. As the life-blood slowly ebbed from her faithful bosom, the eyes of the gentle sufferer unclosed, to fix themselves for a moment upon her venerable attendant.

"One last service, good Randolfo!" faltered the dying lady.

"Speak!—oh, speak!" sobbed the good old man, vainly attempting to staunch the flowing blood.

"For *me* your cares avail not. But let me not have died in vain!—Leave me!—the hand of God is with me!—leave me!—follow them—and save her for my sake!"

"Never!" cried the faithful seneschal; "be it mine in life and death to watch over my master's child!"

But he spoke to listless ears. The hand of God was indeed with Victoria Manfredi. In the effort of that last entreaty her gentle spirit had passed away.

THE HAIR-MARKET OF EVREUX.

THE HAIR-MARKET OF EVREUX.

NORMANDY is a fine and fertile land; sturdy in its provinciality of usage, custom, and costume; and appealing, with peculiar force, to the sympathies of our own country, through links of historical association and affinity, resembling the ivy branches that serve to hold together the loosening corner-stones of some antique tower; to which, spring after spring, their verdure imparts a show of vitality connecting it with the passing time. In Normandy, we trace the habits of life of the fathers of our forefathers; we admire the Gothic temples that formed the models of those wherein the baptized savages of Albion first knelt in Christian adoration; we cast an eye of angry jealousy upon the tapestried effigies of warriors, who, even though their blood be flowing in our veins, are known to us by the title, odious in our ears, of "Conquerors of Britain." We feel ourselves, in short, to be traversing the lands of a kinsman—but a kinsman against whom we are bound to entertain a sort of hereditary

grudge and lingering jealousy—yet in whose face we distinguish the features of our own, while his voice bears the inflection of voices which are dear to our heart.

A Norman farm, in particular, is almost the only rustic habitation, throughout the kingdom of France, which, for a moment, recalls to mind the homesteads of agricultural England. During the blossoming of the cider orchards, or the gathering of the apple-harvest, you might pass a day in some ancient manor on the banks of the Orne; or, during the summer-heats, luxuriate among those pastures skirting the Seine, where the small compact cows of some rich dairy-farm stand half-hidden in the fresh and dewy grass; and fancy yourself transported to the "farmy fields" of Worcester or Herefordshires, or the luxuriant meadows of Chester or Essex. Forget, for a moment, the trimly neatness of the farm-parlour of your own country, and close your eyes upon the high-towering cap and tinselled jacket of the Norman farm-damsel, and England will be before you;—England, with its warm hearts and open hands—its abruptness of greeting and scantiness of ceremonial. The Norman peasant is neither subservient, nor even courteous, as his brethren of the adjoining provinces; but obstinate, litigious, or frank and loyal, as his humour serves; and, above all, proud of his downright spirit of

independence, as a Vendean of his hoodwinked Bourbonism.

In one of the greenest and most fertile nooks of the Norman department of the Eure, there stands a solid but antiquated farm-house, of somewhat manorial pretensions, known by the name of Trois-Fresnes; and inhabited, from sire to son, from the days of the Fronde, or even earlier, by a family named Froslin—people of honourable renown; content to follow, from generation to generation, the calling of Norman graziers; proud of themselves, their cattle, and their rich pasturage, and, above all, of the cordial good-will of their numerous neighbours.

Extending between a richly wooded *côte* and the waters of the Seine, and sufficiently near the mouth of the river to assign to a portion of their fertile fields the distinction of Pré Salé, or Salt-marsh, so coveted by the feeders and dairy-farmers supplying the markets of the French metropolis, the lands of Trois-Fresnes are regarded with an envious eye by many a neighbouring *cultivateur* connected with the victualling-trade of the French or American shipping, in the adjacent town of Hâvre de Grâce; for, on more than one Shrove Tuesday, the Bœuf Gras, or prize ox of the good city of Paris, has been purchased by some ambitious butcher of the Marché des Innocens or St Honoré, from the

closes of the Froslins; and, at various epochs of the family history, when the matron heading the house has chanced to be of cunning equal to her industry, the dairy is known to have produced cheeses equal in excellence, if not in reputation, to the far-famed *fromages* of Roquefort or Neufchâtel. Trois-Fresnes is, in short, a favoured spot; and its people, at the period we describe, happy and prosperous people.

It is pretty well known that, in France, a sort of anti-Malthusian principle prevails:—that those persons alone permit themselves to boast of a numerous generation, who have nothing to bestow in inheritance upon their children, but the proud man's contumely, and a life of labour. Rarely, indeed, does more than a double olivebranch overshadow the roof-tree of the rich; a son and daughter, or two sons, being considered a sufficient family to divide, according to the equalising laws of the land, the largest estate or richest patrimony. And, in this respect, the Froslins emulated their more aristocratic neighbours. Twice had Trois-Fresnes been divided into the portions of Jacob and Esau; an elder brother assuming the grazing-lands, a younger the dairy-farm; always, however, to remain domesticated together in the same ancestral dwelling. But the property had been as often reunited and reconcentrated, by intermarriage or lack of offspring in one of the

tribes; and it seemed fated that the farm should remain "one and indivisible."

Towards the close of the last century, however, a certain old Eustache Froslin found himself not only sole proprietor of Trois-Fresnes, but father of two stout and likely sons, destined once more to sever in twain the heritage of his forefathers, and, in all probability, to provide it with heritors innumerable, of their several generations. It was impossible to see two finer, freer-hearted, more spirited young fellows, than Eustache and Sylvain Froslin; foremost of all the country side at a fray or frolic, and noticed, (even when in turns accompanying their father, every Carnival-tide, to the capital, to settle accounts with the *Comestible* dealers of the Palais-Royal, or the purveyors of the Halles,) for their manly bearing and handsome persons. Sharing, in equal measure, these external advantages and the affection of their parents, not a notion of rivalship entered their heads. They loved each other with a love truly fraternal; and it was tacitly understood in the family that, whenever the increasing infirmities of old Eustache might render it desirable for him to retire from the active management of the farm, his two sons would marry and bring home their wives; Eustache taking the direction of the grazing department, Sylvain of the dairy-farm, as had already chanced in the administration of

the Froslin household. So ran the inclinations of the two lads; and Père Froslin and his jovial old helpmate often inquired of their boys, when they returned together from the fair of Caen, or the annual fêtes of Rouen, whether they had chosen them each a Rachael after his liking, in order to recommence these establishments of the family.

At length, just as he attained his twenty-first year, young Eustache was heard to answer in the affirmative; and it was greatly to the joy of the prudent parents that his affections had been so sagely influenced as to have fallen on the only child of a wealthy cider-grower, the amount of whose dowry would at once restore the moiety of the dismembered farm to its pristine importance, since Eustache might either bestow an equivalent in money upon his younger brother, or, by the purchase of adjoining lands, render his own half larger than the whole. On this hint the young man spake, however, decidedly and loudly in the negative. From his youth upwards, his anticipations of earthly happiness had vested themselves in a household shared with his brother Sylvain, and his brother Sylvain's future family; nor would the temptations of a royal palace (not even of the Château d'Eu, with all its dependencies) have bribed him from his purpose. Whatever lands he might be disposed

to add to his share of the farm of Trois-Fresnes, live together they must, as all of the name of Froslin had done before them!

Under these happy auspices, the wedding of the elder brother was now about to be celebrated; and Sylvain, whose spirit was of a more gay, and perhaps, somewhat more graceless turn, was often heard jesting with Eustache upon the careful comforts so early awaiting him, and the sobriety of demeanour thenceforward befitting Benedick, as "the married man;" and the bridegroom-expectant was sometimes seen to shake his head gravely in reply. But not a syllable of retort or reproach was heard to escape his lips; not a word or insinuation that could be supposed to compromise the discretion of Sylvain in the estimation of his father and mother; so that it fell with the startling force of a thunderbolt upon the old people, when, shortly afterwards, and before their elder son had yet brought home his wife, the younger was detected in an affair of village gallantry; which, in a family so rigidly moral, was accounted among the most heinous of human enormities. Accustomed to weigh every infraction of divine and temporal law with the same balance, and on the same blind principle, their indignation was now so vehemently demonstrated, that Sylvain, at heart a rover, scrupled not to depart furtively from his

unquiet home, to make the best of his way to Hâvre, and finally to set sail in a vessel bound to the Havannah!

The truant was heard of no more at the farm of Trois-Fresnes! The marriage of Eustache with Manette Leclercq—deferred from week to week, and month to month, in hopes that the wanderer would return, humbled and repentant, to knit anew the links of that domestic chain which his absence had tended so strangely and unexpectedly to disunite—was at length solemnized; and when, at the expiration of a year, ylvain remained still absent, and deigned not even to communicate to his family the motives of his estrangement, the friendly inquiries of the neighbours and acquaintances of old Froslin merged in significant and most mysterious silence. All felt convinced that Sylvain would come no more; that mischief had befallen the truant. His name became of forbidden utterance at Trois-Fresnes.

The frail damsel, the original cause of his disgrace, died within twelvemonths of his departure; and, although a victim to some such unromantic distemper as the measles or a bilious fever, was always said to have pined away in remorse for her faults, or grief for the flight of her paramour; and Eustache and Manette took their place by the family fireside, with a tacit agreement that Sylvain

should never more be mentioned in the hearing of the old people, to draw down their tears, or excite their parental ire. Nor did the father and mother seem inclined to provoke a breach of this resolution. Their whole attention was fixed upon the cradle of a little Manette Froslin, which had been added to the household furniture of Trois-Fresnes; and, though vexed in their hearts that Providence had not willed it to shelter the head of an Eustache of the third generation, instead of a little girl, the babe was a promising babe, and the newly-acquired names of grandsire and grand-dame highly pleasing in their ears.

A second year elapsed, and brought with it that second pledge of family peace and prosperity which seemed to form the limit of Froslin ambition; and this time the child was not only a boy, but honoured by the beloved name as sacred to the farm of Trois-Fresnes as that of "George" to the Conservatives of Great Britain, or "Louis" to the Constitutionalists of France. A fate, however, was upon the youngest born. After a few months, Eustache Froslin III. pined and died, apparently of no other malady than the over-watching and over-tending of its kindred; and to hear the lamentation that rose over its little coffin, it appeared as if all the sorrow connected with the disappearance of Sylvain was forgotten in the grief arising from the untimely decease of a toothless nursling!

Again, however, after a year, the family complement was achieved, by the birth of a second son—a new Eustache; when Eustache, the father, could not refrain from whispering, in paternal triumph to his wife, Manette, that, if Sylvain should ever return, he would be strangely startled to find his place, in the affection of his parents, usurped by this younger and fairer favourite; and, with utter inconsideration, the young mother smiled at the cruel idea!

Once more, however, their prospects were destined to be cruelly blighted! While little Manette throve and prospered, her brother insensibly withered away; and, ere his little feet could be taught to keep pace with the now tottering steps of his grandfather, the boy was laid beside his brother, under the sod. Madame Eustache, as the younger matron was denominated in the neighbourhood, was inconsolable under this second bereavement. She fancied herself predestined to afford only a female inheritor to the estate; while her husband, who during his prosperity, had seemed, for a time, forgetful of the singular disappearance of Sylvain, now involuntarily recurred to the remembrance of his brother, as if for consolation. Had *he* been there, a comforter had not been wanting; had *he* been there, there would have been no fear of the lands of Trois-Fresnes falling, at

some future moment, into disrepute, for want of the strong right arm of a Froslin, to render them justice. Eustache even renewed, that season, the periodical journey to Havre, which he had already begun to neglect, to prosecute his often made and vainly urged inquiries, of the various maritime agents of the port, whether aught had transpired concerning the destinies of the crew of the good ship, the *Belle Lisette*, supposed to have been captured by the Portuguese five years before, in its voyage from Harfleur to the Havannah. Still the same unsatisfactory replies were elicited by his interrogations; and the only consolation which Eustache could lay to his soul, was to name his third boy, born in the course of the following year, "Sylvain," after his brother. Objections were raised, indeed, in the little family against so unlucky an entitlement; but he would not hear of renewing the memory of the unfortunate babes they mourned, by christening a fifth "Eustache;" and it was undeniable that the names of Eustache or Sylvain had now served for more than two centuries to designate the successive masters of Trois-Fresnes, having seemingly identified themselves with the family of Froslin.

Nevertheless, the evil auguries of the young mother were strictly fulfilled. Little Sylvain prospered no better than his predecessors. His

infant cries were feeble—his infant frame fragile; and, in proportion to his infirmities, was he loved and fondled by the father and mother, to whom fatal experience had imparted that agonizing foreknowledge which dwells with such yearning tenderness upon every numbered grain of sand in the hour-glass of a predestined child. Little Manette ceased, by comparison, to interest their feelings — nay, they were almost angry with her for remaining so hale and robust, while the heir of their hopes was drooping in slow but sure decay; for their harvests ripened in due season—their flocks and herds brought forth their young—and the sleek oxen stood panting with fulness, shoulder deep in their rich pastures—yet still the sickly babe pined in its cradle, till, at length, a third grave was dug beside those of the two innocent creatures who had already borne and laid down their little burthens of earthly care! And, lo! a third time, the Froslins of Trois-Fresnes were left with only a girl to inherit their riches, and convey them to the family of a stranger!

Old Eustache and his wife, now infirm and fractious, dwelt peevishly on their disappointment, as though the death of the boys were the fault and not the affliction of Manette and her husband. They complained, as if God had dealt unjustly by them; and cried aloud upon the

name of their younger-born—of Sylvain the wanderer—as if their lamentations could bring him back to them from the wilds of undiscovered countries, or the caves of the great deep!

Apparently, their prayers were heard! One fine evening, towards the close of the very summer the earliest roses of which had been scattered over the grave of little Sylvain, the family of Froslin was collected together near the portal of the farm, under one of those ancient and moss-grown ash trees or *frênes*, from which its name was supposed to be derived, gloomy and dispirited, and having driven away, by repeated chidings of her merriment, the little Manette, who would willingly have remained sporting at the feet of her half-blind grandsire. The golden sunshine was streaming over the fertile orchard, bringing to view the ripe plenteousness of its musky fruits; the kine, newly driven in from the pastures, were dispensing from the neighbouring yard their pure fragrance of breath; the bees were wending to their hives, the doves circling round their cot, the watch-dogs about to be loosed, the gates closed for the night; when the child, who had strayed from the silent and meditative family group towards a small garden gate leading through a close to the high road, suddenly made her appearance, leading, or rather

dragging by the hand, a sturdy urchin, of nearly her own age—sunburnt, tattered, but with large dark eyes peering out beneath his black dishevelled curls, which afforded grace and vivacity to his countenance.

"Here is a *petit bonhomme*, mother, who says he is hungry," said Manette, forgetting her disgrace in the interest with which she pleaded the cause of her newly-found acquaintance. "May I give him a portion of my supper?"

"Thou wouldst always be sharing thy supper with one vagrant or another," replied her mother reprovingly. "Where didst thou find this boy? Let him go—turn him out of the garden—he is no playmate for thee."

"No *playmate*; but so *poor*—so *very* poor—and so ragged and so hungry—that, for the sake of mercy, dear mother," (even the child had too much tact and delicacy to utter the word *charity* in the hearing of so miserable an object,) "I beseech you send him not forth again to the road, till he has eaten and is satisfied!"

"And what is he doing in the road?" rejoined her father in a hoarse voice.

"Begging, no doubt—perhaps stealing!" added the old grandmother in a fretful voice.

"Neither begging nor stealing," persisted Manette, with some degree of firmness; "but

sitting patiently beside his poor father and mother who were resting themselves, and, I think, weeping, under the hedge of the orchard."

"Trampers, on their road to Hâvre," interrupted the old farmer; "and probably intent upon robbing our orchard."

"Robbing the orchard!" ejaculated little Manette, her heart swelling against such an accusation; "when 'tis a poor, infirm, shattered, one-armed sailor."

"And what is thy name, child?" said her father, somewhat mollified by this description, and addressing the boy.

"Eustache!" replied the urchin, firmly, but in a foreign accent.

"Eustache *what?*" reiterated the younger Froslin, with gradually awakening interest.

But the boy only shook his head in reply, and seemed to turn towards his friend Manette for an explanation of the question. The little girl, however, was no less at fault than himself; only, when the anonymous Eustache again repeated, in broken French, his original complaint, that he was hungry, *very* hungry, she no longer scrupled to appeal to the hospitality of her parents in his behalf. She then felt that an "Eustache," descended from whatever stock, could not be turned hungry away from the door of the Froslins.

"Fetch in your father and mother, my little

man," said her father, insensibly relenting, as he gazed upon the proud bearing of the fine little fellow. "Or, stay—(he does not appear half to understand us)—do *you* go forth, Manette, into the road, and bid these people make their way into the kitchen. There is broken meat enough at Trois-Fresnes to put heart into an old sailor and his wife, for a league or two of their road across the country." And Manette needed no second injunction. In a moment she was through the garden, the meadow, and leading back towards the house the objects of her untaught benevolence. But she had no mind to conduct her protégés to the kitchen. She could not help flattering herself that, when her parents discerned with their own eyes the maimed and distressed condition of the father of little Eustache, they would do more in succour of his wants than throw him a few morsels of meat, substracted from the portion of the house-dog. On pretext, therefore, of bringing the wayfarers to meet their child, she imagined to guide them directly to the spot where the Froslin family sat united beneath the spreading ash-tree.

The child had not, however, prepared herself for half that was to follow her manœuvres. As the limping sailor approached the family group, an old mastiff, forming one of the ancient guardians of the farm, suddenly leaped up from his

accustomed post at the feet of the old man; and, instead of fulfilling the general expectation of a furious attack upon their suspicious-looking visiter, crouched whining to his feet, licked his hands and ragged vestments;—and, when encouraged by the stranger's apostrophe of "*Toi, au moins, Bobonne, tu me reconnais!*" jumped almost into his arms, with barkings and whinings of recognition and tenderness.

The attention of Eustache was thus directed towards the countenance of their mysterious guest; and it needed only a moment's scrutiny to induce him to fling his own arms around the neck of the dismembered sailor; while he exclaimed, in sobbing accents, "My brother—my dear, dear Sylvain!"

Again a few seconds, and the poor wanderer was clasped to the bosom of his grey-headed father; while the decrepid Madame Froslin surveyed, with impassioned emotion, those grievous changes which the chances of war and the vicissitudes of foreign climes had wrought upon the person of her youngest born.

"And he is still only in the flower of his age!" she again and again exclaimed to her daughter-in-law—"only six-and-thirty, if he live till Michaelmas; yet, as you see, so grievously has the poor soul been disfigured, that the very mother who bore him can scarcely recognise the fine gal-

lant young fellow whose imprudence forced him to quit a quiet home, and rush into the perils and mischances of a sea-faring life."

"Not a word now of imprudence," interrupted the trembling voice of the old father.

"Not a word more of imprudence," repeated the joyous brother, who found his own troubles obliterated by the delight of once more clasping his youth's companion to his breast; and, at the same moment, all turned their eyes towards the female companion of Sylvain, who had retired to the back-ground, and was silently but tearfully caressing her little boy; on which Sylvain replying with a proud voice to their mute inquiry, announced—"*My wife and my son;*" and Eustache was instantly by their side, and leading them forwards to receive the benediction of the old people.

So engrossed, indeed, was he by this well-motived effort, that not for a single moment did it occur to him that the little stranger was come to frustrate his own children of what had been so long esteemed their inheritance. His heart was warm towards the dark-eyed woman, so lovely and so young, even in the extremity of distress; and towards the boy whom Manette's humanity had been so prompt to restore to the enjoyment of his rights.

"Why surprise us thus?—why mistrust us

thus?" cried he to his new sister-in-law, as he placed her on a seat beside his wife. "Why not at once rush across the threshold of Trois-Fresnes, and take among us the place so long vacant."

"We were in no plight to present ourselves at your gate," replied the beautiful stranger, in imperfect French. "We should have been repulsed by your servants; and Sylvain decided that we should tarry till nightfall by the way-side, ere we knelt down to demand the blessing of his parents. But my boy was famishing—we had not tasted food since morning, and"—

"Where is he—where is he?" cried Eustache, looking round for his little namesake. "Ah! Manette is wiser than we are!—My girl has carried him off to supply him with a hearty supper." And off he set in his turn, to see a plenteous board spread for the wayfarers; and to order the farm-servants out of the way, that none might pry into his brother's misery,

And happy indeed was the re-united family, when that night they sat at meat, listening to Sylvain's recital of his escape from the hurricanes of the Western world, only to fall into the hands of the pirates of those unquiet seas—of his recapture with the horde of Buccaneers, by the imperial flag of the Brazils—of his long imprisonment and galling labour under the scorching sun of La

Plata—and, finally, of his escape and flight, favoured by the affectionate zeal of a lady of the land, who saw and loved the European captive, who deserted all to be his companion, and whom he now presented to the gratitude of his own family as his Isabella—his wife—the mother of his noble boy.

Together, he said, for three long years, they had toiled in one of the most sultry mine-districts of Chili, to procure means of reaching the coast and obtaining a passage to France; and she, who, in the first instance, had abandoned name and fame, riches and comfort, to be the wife of a fugitive, had laboured with her soft hands, and given her tender loveliness to the withering fervour of a meridian sky, to further the projects of her husband: so that Isabella, though still beautiful, in the lustre of her large eyes, and the blackness of glossy hair, was old beyond her age—olive-hued beyond the deep complexion of her country.

And though at the close of supper, and the exciting narrative of her husband, a brilliant carnation tinged, for the first time for many months, that soft brown cheek, Madame Eustache was secretly of opinion, "that the foreign woman, or lady, or whatever she might choose to call herself, was as black as the Queen of Sheba, and no great beauty after all;" for Manette was already inwardly hurt by the ejaculation of her old father-in-

law, that, after all, it was fortunate enough neither of his three sickly grandsons survived, since *now* there was once more a stout and healthful "Eustache" to represent the Froslins of Trois-Fresnes!

This momentary jealousy subsided, however, when she found herself called upon to do a woman's part in equipping the destitute stranger, from her wardrobe; and when, on the morrow, she beheld Madame Sylvain arrayed in Norman costume, and admired the raven brilliancy of the tresses she had herself assisted to roll into a *chignon* under her coif, after the fashion of her native province, the almost girlish *naïveté* with which Isabella was the first to make sport of the awkwardness of her appearance in her new habiliments, and the good earnest with which she set about aiding Madame Eustache in the household tasks which this sudden accession to the family imposed upon all its members, won all hearts to her cause.

The old people, indeed, were wholly taken up with the beauty and forwardness of the grandson, who seemed miraculously vouchsafed, by Providence, to relieve the apprehensions of their declining years, of seeing their time-honoured name extinct in the land; while Eustache was reverting, with his brother, to reminiscences of the past and a thousand projects for the future; among

which, not the least edifying was a pilgrimage of the united family to the shrine of *Notre Dame de bon Secours*, in the neighbourhood of Hâvre, with the votive offering of a silver ship, to fulfil a vow which Sylvain admitted himself to have made in the great peril of a Carribbean hurricane.

And now the fatted calf was slain, and the neighbours called in. All was joy and festivity at Trois-Fresnes; and little Eustache and Manette danced together upon the green sward, while his parents sat recounting, for the hundredth time, their hair-breadth 'scapes, their toils and privations.

The curé of the village—who, having been summoned to consecrate the silver frigate, (procured by commission from one of the best artificers of the *Quai des Orfèvres*,) took part in the fête and the discussion—was heard learnedly questioning the wanderers concerning the mineral and botanical products of the outlandish regions they had visited—the modes of their religious faith—the fashioning of their meats, drink, and raiment; while the old Norman farmers demanded, in their turn, a description of the Pampas, the wild horses, and the *lasso*; and their wives and daughters strove to extract news from the scarcely comprehensible French of Isabella, touching those far-off lands, where the very pebble-stones are emeralds

and diamonds, and the fire-tongs of beaten silver.

After a short period, however, these diversions and pleasant gossipings gave way to the sober business of life. Sylvain, unable from his infirmities, to re-assume his former active occupations in the farm, was deputed, by the common accord of his father and brother, to preside over its book-accompts and bargains, its chafferings and measurings forth; and once more old Froslin signified to his two sons the order of partition which was to mark out their portions of inheritance. Each was well content. Heartily had the two brothers loved each other from their childhood; and, in the interim of their separation, both had deeply suffered—Sylvain in the flesh, Eustache in the spirit; and Sylvain was now a maimed man and an infirm—and Eustache had the memory of the three fair babes he had lost, still haunting his happy homestead, and subduing him to a moderate frame of mind.

Manette had just attained her seventh year, and her young cousin was two years younger, when these singular events brought them together under the roof of their ancestors. But little Eustache bold and brave as a lion, and framed in Herculean mould, had the appearance of being even older than the girl; and they had not played together six months among the farm-fields, and

along the wooded steeps of the *côte*, when old Froslin whispered to his wife—"The lands of Trois-Fresnes will not, after all, be broken up. The curé tells me it will be easy to procure a dispensation—the children doat upon each other:—may we survive to behold them man and wife!"

Nor was the prayer less cordially echoed by the parents of Eustache and Manette. It would have been difficult to say to which mother which child was dearest. Madame Eustache was always fancying she detected in the boy the features and qualities which might have graced the sons she had lost; while the sweet and feminine disposition of the generous Manette accorded better with those of her foreign aunt than with the more homely habits of her own mother; for Manette was, according to Wordsworth's interpretation—a lady of nature's making; possessed of a thousand lively sensibilities, a thousand graces of demeanour, inspired by her habitual communing with the flowers and birds, the woods and waters.

Her Brazilian kinswoman was the first female of gentle birth with whom she had been on habits of intimacy; and cordially did they cling to each other, and very readily did the Norman niece acquire the language, the songs, the love of that distant country, to which, spite of herself,

the thoughts of Madame Sylvain were ever straying. Dearly as she loved the husband for whom she had sacrificed so much, and the son who would willingly have sacrificed all to *her*, Isabella pined inwardly, amid the humid glades of grassy Normandy, for the parching skies and parched sands of her native soil.

She missed its wild guitars, its luscious fruits, its gorgeous flowers, its sparkling insects, its bright-winged birds—she missed its glowing-hearted children—

> Souls made of fire, and children of the sun.

So cheerful was she, and so affectionate, however, in their family circle, that none could fancy or believe she was pining after unattainable enjoyments; and Sylvain's wife sank under a rapid decline, ere any, save her young niece, supposed her to be ailing.

The death of the foreigner produced a wider chasm in the circle of Trois-Fresnes than could have been anticipated. Her great piety, her gentleness, her unaffected adoption of the habits of life of her husband's family, had endeared her to all. Even the old people regarded her with a sort of admiration to be lavished on some rare and costly ornament unexpectedly attained; unconsciously they felt her tones, gestures, and senti-

ments to be superior to their own; and, when she had departed, Trois-Fresnes seemed bereaved of some heavenly visitant.

The old people did not long survive her. Within a few weeks of each other, and a few months of Isabella, the aged Froslins took their place, side by side, in that corner of the village cemetery long appropriated to their race; and the last wishes of the old farmer were found to be strictly in accordance with the first—that the estate of Trois-Fresnes should be exactly portioned between his two sons; and at some future time, re-united, by the union of their offspring—a project in which all parties coincided.

And now the little household, once more and hopelessly dismembered, grew sad and sorrowful. Young Eustache, having attained his eleventh year, was dispatched to a school at Caen, for a smattering of education: while Manette, already thirteen, and, in appearance, verging towards womanhood, began to lend effectual assistance to her mother in the administration of her uncle's dairy-farm.

Nevertheless, Madame Eustache, who had ever been a less tender parent to Manette, than might have been anticipated from her passionate fondness for her more fragile children, was apt to complain that the girl had been spoiled for a life of usefulness, by the whimsy-fangled lessons of

the foreign aunt; that her mind was ever wandering after romantic vagaries; that she would make, at best, but a slothful housewife; that young Eustache, if he valued his substance, must learn to look narrowly to his own house-tending. She did not, indeed, accuse Manette of undue devotion to the pastimes befitting her age, of a tendency to dress, or village coquetry; for Manette, alas! was hard and homely of feature! Her voice was low and gentle, her waist slender, her step light, her hair brown and luxuriant; but sooth to say, she was an ugly girl.

It was not that those interested in discerning beauties in the damsel of Trois-Fresnes, had not discovered an expression of deep sensibility in her full grey eyes; and that, when she sang, it was with a plaintiveness that called up tears from the hardest heart. Still, she was plain, decidedly and indefensibly plain; and even Eustache, who dearly loved his kind-hearted and noble-spirited cousin, did not venture to deny the fact, when rallied concerning the ordinary features of his future wife by his young companions of the neighbourhood. Her mother, therefore, in chiding her habitual heedlessness of the things of this world, forebore, at least, to attribute the failing to the growing influence of an overweening vanity.

So passed the days, so passed the years, at

Trois-Fresnes: Eustache and his wife, exclusively occupied with the administration of their temporal affairs; with the joy of adding louis-d'ors to their store; of driving a hard bargain with the purveyors, their customers; or an easy one for some new close or coveted nook of land, which their savings enabled them to add to their estate;—and Sylvain divided between his tenderness for the memory of his wife and for the living son she had bequeathed him.

He felt, indeed, that his infirmities were gradually bearing him down to the grave, and repined not at a prospect which promised to reunite him with Isabella; but it tended, in some degree, to inspire him with the desire of life, when, as young Eustace advanced in years, the wildness and positiveness of his disposition seemed to render him peculiarly dependent on parental guidance. Nay, sometimes, when the niece, who so affectionately tended the old sailor in his ailments, was lending him her arm to traverse the meadows, or visit his cattle in their closes, he would whisper to Manette his apprehensions that, at some future time, her household happiness might be impaired by the impetuosity of his son.

But the young girl would hear no evil-speaking touching her cousin, even from the lips of his father. She had always a kind word of extenua-

tion for his faults or follies—a word of fond reminiscence for him who, in his babyhood, she had been the first to guide back to the home of his ancestors; for him who, in a few short years, would be to her all in all—her prop, her stay, her comforter, her lover, her husband!

At last, the excesses of Eustache attained a height which could neither be concealed from his father, nor extenuated by his little wife; and, in spite of Manette's whispered remonstrance to Sylvain—"Remember, dear uncle, it was the severity with which my grandfather visited your own boyish offences that drove you forth to exile, and proved the origin of so many misfortunes; be merciful, therefore, with Eustache, for his sake, and mine, and your own;" the father of the only son would hear of nothing less than alienating him from the neighbourhood, by placing him for a year or two in a commercial counting-house at Hâvre, under a rigid master, and with a scanty stipend and allowance, so as effectually to repress his tendencies to folly and extravagance. For the best sake of his son, he resolved to dispense, for a time, with the comforts of his society; even though aware that his own days were numbered, and that he must shortly bid adieu alike to the niece who ministered to his happiness, and the son who neglected it.

It was on the eve of Eustache's departure for

Hâvre—a place which, to the apprehensions of a country-girl like Manette, presented all the perilous seductions of a great metropolis—that the two cousins were wandering together among the thickets of the côte, which had seen them grow up together in companionship so familiar; and Manette who had now attained her seventeenth year, could not repress her tears, on perceiving that the joyous boy found it impossible to conceal the delight with which he anticipated his removal from the harsh restrictions and tedious monotony of home; nor was it till, at the close of a wild expatiation on the pleasures awaiting him, he turned to claim the ever-ready sympathy of his cousin, that Eustache for a moment conjectured she could be either pained or alarmed by his infatuation.

"You are in tears, dearest coz—you are in tears!" cried he, taking within his own the hand with which she was furtively wiping away the tears of her sorrow. "What ails you, Manette? Have your parents vexed you? Has my father"——

"No, no!" interrupted his companion; "no one has vexed me—all are kind to me—all considerate; only, when I hear you talk of theatres and balls—of pastimes and parties of pleasure—and think how much you will find yonder in the gay city to divert your thoughts from

Trois-Fresnes, and those whom you leave here, I own I tremble. You will forget us, Eustache; and then whom shall I have to remember me?"

"You cannot, you dare not think it!" ejaculated Eustache, clasping more forcibly to his bosom the hand he still detained. "Forget *you*, my kind, generous cousin—my companion, my first but never-failing advocate in all our family quarrels? Forget *you?* No, Manette! *your* father or mine may at times anger me, by their schooling, into giving hasty answers, or plunging into wilder follies; but trust me, that against my own dear Manette, I never, for a moment, entertained an angry thought or feeling."

It was not, however, such an asseveration as this that could reassure the sinking heart of the anxious girl. She noticed that her cousin, in his enumeration of the bonds that entwined them together, dwelt exclusively upon the past; nor alluded to that still more engrossing tie, which, after a lapse of two short years, was to unite them exclusively to each other. Again her tears flowed fast, and again Eustache strove to soothe them away; and it was between the bursts of emotion, produced by the tenderness of his manner, that Manette (while resting on a thicket-bank of soft green turf by his side, with her head half resting on the shoulder of the be-

loved companion of her childhood) once more exclaimed:—

"Nevertheless, I know—I feel—I fear—that a few months will suffice to obliterate from your mind these homely scenes, this tranquil existence; and, above all, those whose hopes of happiness are centred in your affections. What am *I*, that you should remember me? A rude country girl—untaught—unrefined—different—oh! how different from the gentle ladies with whom you will now converse! and who will charm you from the remembrance of your poor cousin, by the gayness of their attire—the sweetness of their music—the lightness of their footsteps in the dance"——

A long, long kiss, impressed upon the fine open forehead of his betrothed, was the reply of Eustache to her remonstrances. "You do not think all this, or I would never forgive you," was his fervent rejoinder. "Well do you know, that not all the practised graces, not all the charms and accomplishments in the world, would weigh with me against one kind word from your lips—against one tress of this bright chestnut hair, which I love so dearly!" And, unrolling the long *chignon* of poor Manette, which, in the closeness of that dear embrace, had escaped from beneath her cap, he gave to the sunshine a luxuriant pro-

fusion of waving and glossy locks, which the choicest beauty of the city might have been proud to possess; and which even Manette, humble-minded as she was, sometimes contemplated with triumph, from their having at times drawn forth the admiration of her cousin. And now he insisted that she should bestow upon him, as a parting pledge, one of the beautiful tresses which he had disentangled from the rest; and Manette returned to the farm, cheered, if not comforted; and on the following day, the Diligence of Havre carried off from Trois-Fresnes, Eustache and his baggage; and, again, a wide chasm appeared in the circle of the farm.

The first event, alas! that came to diversify the even tenor of the family proceedings, was an appeal for a heavy sum of money from Eustache to his father. He admitted, frankly but penitently, that, for the first time, he had suffered himself to be enticed to the gaming-table, by companions, who, by fair means or foul, had entangled him in embarrassments nearly doubling the amount of his father's yearly gains; and Sylvain blazed forth at the demand. It afforded, however, some comfort to poor Manette, that, having been hastily employed by her father to read the letter bearing the Hâvre post-mark, which communicated this disastrous intelligence, she succeeded in calming down her uncle's fury in time to prevent him from ren-

dering public the disgrace of his son; and throwing herself at her uncle's feet, she implored him to conceal, from the displeasure of her parents, for *her* sake—for the sake of the niece he loved—the imprudence of him who was to be her husband. She assured him that her father, already bitterly incensed against Eustache, might be tempted to break off their engagements, on discovering his future son-in-law to be a gambler; and eventually managed to coax old Sylvain into despatching the necessary sum to the offender, and employing herself as an amanuensis to communicate the intelligence; for Manette was firmly persuaded that her cousin's penitence was sincere; that this first offence would be the last; and very great was her amazement, and grievous her disappointment, when, within six months of her uncle's generous sacrifice, there came a second letter, acknowledging similar errors, enclosed in one to herself, praying her to uphold the confession of his faults by her influence with his father. For a few minutes, Manette was indignant; but, on a second perusal of Eustache's epistle, the words, "My dear cousin,"—"my own Manette,"—were found to be so often repeated, and to assume so fair a grace, when endited in her cousin's now firm and clerkly handwriting, that she resolved, instead of fulfilling his commission, and forwarding his petition with his father, to supply the needful sum from funds of

her own; not that Manette was a hoarder—her hand was as open as her heart was benevolent—but her old grandmother had one day bestowed upon her, in a fit of jealousy of Madame Eustache's interference with the administration of her affairs, a bag of gold-pieces, the fruits of her spinning, with a charge that she would apply the money to the purchase of household linen, whenever her union with her cousin might render necessary an extension of the establishment at Trois-Fresnes; and Manette felt that she could not better appropriate the gift of the old lady, than by rescuing from disgrace a grandson who had been the object of her idolatry. She sent him, therefore, every livre in her possession, drained the last piece from her little purse, and retired to rest that night content that, on the night following, the pillow of her cousin Eustache would be no longer sleepless. And this time, Manette felt reassured against all possibility of the recurrence of a fault which had brought such cruel anxieties, and such a weight of obligation on the head of the culprit.

For some time, indeed—for more than a year ensuing—her favourite auguries seemed destined to fulfilment. No further demands for money, at least, reached either father or cousin; and if the latter felt somewhat grieved at heart by the application made by Eustache, on two successive occasions for permission to spend his season of annual

carnival festivity with a friend at Caen—instead of returning, according to French custom, to pass them in the bosom of his family—the taunts and insinuations of certain of their less friendly neighbours (who had often brought rumours to the farm of the misdoings of her cousin) put her pride upon its guard; and she was careful not to betray to her parents or uncle the excess of her mortification.

Even when, within six months of the period fixed for their marriage, Eustache at length condescended to visit Trois-Fresnes, to pass a few days of his vacation, Manette was far from satisfied with the alteration wrought in her future bridegroom. He had acquired, indeed, the air, tone, and habits of a gentleman—far too much so, she thought, for his future position in life; but he had also acquired a sort of supercilious *nonchalance*—a smile of superiority, a heartless gallantry of demeanour—affording a pitiful exchange for the wild, warm-hearted impulses of the Eustache of happier times. To their approaching union during his short stay at the farm, he never once alluded—never sought her in private—never recurred to the past—never touched upon the future. His sole anxiety, as she readily perceived, was to get away again from home; and desolate, indeed, to Manette, were the six months following this disappointing, hope-withering visit: *so* desolate, that

the events which followed scarcely seemed to startle or distress her. It was her uncle, it was her father who raved and reviled the rebel of their race, on the receipt of a letter from Eustache, acquainting them of his determination to follow a mercantile career, in preference to submitting to the drudgery of the farm; and of "his deep regret that circumstances of an unforeseen nature must prevent him from fulfilling his matrimonial engagements with his cousin!"

Even Eustache, however, reckless as he was, had not calculated upon *all* the consequences of this abrupt disclosure. He had anticipated remonstrances, revilings, menaces: but he did not, for a moment conjecture, that his father, long ailing and infirm, would lie stretched a corpse beneath the roof of Trois-Fresnes, within twelve hours of the receipt of a communication that seemed to threaten destruction to its walls! Nor did his uncle, in replying to the audacious epistle, which had overthrown every hope and expectation of the Froslin family, scruple to acquaint his graceless nephew that he might consider himself the murderer of his father!

Meanwhile, Manette was far more deeply afflicted by witnessing the fate of the uncle she had so tenderly loved and served, than by the blow which had fallen on herself. Not only had she

long prepared herself for such a termination of her ill-omened betrothment, but a private letter from Eustache, despatched at the same time with the more formal communication to his family, almost reconciled her to the event.

"Manette!" he had written, "beloved friend—beloved cousin—pity and forgive a wretch, who among the snares and miseries with which his own vices have encompassed him, experiences, at this moment, no pang so bitter as that which arises from the conviction that he has inflicted suffering on yourself. I will not venture to express a hope, dear cousin, that you have never loved me with the affection which once I did not scruple to solicit from my future wife; for I know that you have loved me—I *feel* that you have loved me—loved me far, far beyond my deserts! Nothing *but* the tenderest love could have inspired the angelic patience with which you have borne with my offences. But let me rather pray you to love me still—to love me as a friend who esteems your virtues—as a kinsman who would devote the last drop of his blood to defend you from injury. When last we met, I was already entangled in miserable engagements of an origin too degrading to reveal to one so good and pure as yourself—engagements extinguishing all hope of the completion of those ties from which I had long derived my hopes of happiness. Such was the

motive, dearest, of my seeming estrangement; such the motive of the alteration of manner, by which I strove to excite your disgust. May the attempt have prospered—may you have been prepared for the cruel communication I am now under the necessity of making to my family! I do not ask you to plead my cause. The indignation and reproaches of my father, I shall bear without a murmur. All I implore of you is, to think of me as little harshly as you can; that, at some future time, I may pretend to your forgiveness, and perhaps claim a place in your regard, as the truest and most devoted of your friends."

That the generous Manette could close her heart against expressions such as these was impossible! She heard throughout the whole household execrations lavished on her cousin. She heard him termed "parricide" by her father; and as she hung over the senseless remains of the unfortunate Sylvain, could scarcely herself refrain from echoing the accusation. Yet, on her own account, she cherished not an angry thought against the companion of her youth; and when, on the morning appointed for the burial of the dead, Eustache, apprized by a letter from her father of the fatal catastrophe produced by his misdeeds, rushed in—pale, haggard, desperate—to preside over the ceremonial of the day, Manette could scarcely refrain from throwing herself upon

his bosom, to whisper words of consolation, and to assure him he had yet a friend.

The solemnity in which the unfortunate young man had now to bear a part, exercised, however, a sort of tranquillizing influence over his despair. While listening to the promises of eternal life vouchsafed to those who die in the Lord, he felt less guilty. His father was not yet wholly lost to him; he indulged the hope of winning, by a life of virtue, restoration to the forgiveness of his parents; and thenceforth became indifferent to the menacing looks of his uncle, to the contemptuous frowns of Madame Eustache. All that need bring him into further contact with his unforgiving relatives was, to tender to them, for purchase, the estate which he had resolved to abandon—to entreat a parting interview with his still beloved cousin—and then, away to the thorny existence he had created for himself, the discharge of his debts, and the cajolements of a paramour he despised!

But of his own destinies, Eustache was never more to be arbiter. Ere yet the company of neighbours was dispersed, which had assembled to assist in the obsequies of the unfortunate Sylvain, in presence of the *curé*, the *bailli*, and chief notary of the village; Eustache Froslin, as head of the house, summoned the young man into council, and cited him to produce those family

vouchers which might entitle him to succeed to a moiety of the farm of Trois-Fresnes; the certificates of his own birth, and the marriage of his parents. Sylvain had left no will, nor any other memorial of the existence of a son; it was, consequently, only by the production of the attestations required by the laws of the land, that the young man could make good his claims upon a single acre of the property.

At any other moment, the accusation of illegitimacy, which now, for the first time, reached him, in his uncle's express assertions that the marriage of his father and mother had never been legally solemnized, would have irritated Eustache to madness. But now, he saw in it only the vengeful retaliation of an uncle who, having long purposed the reunion of the family property by a marriage with his daughter, seized upon the readiest mode of evading his disappointment; or rather immersed in sorrowful reflections on the event of the day, he scarcely comprehended the extent of the evils awaiting him. It was only when the man of the law, answering the invitation of the Père Froslin, read aloud the articles of the National Code, which clearly proved that the young man could not establish the shadow of a claim upon the patrimony of his father, that his ire burst forth; and, hurrying from the assembly, he was about to precipitate himself into the fields—whither, or on

what desperate quest he knew not—when the gentle hand of a woman was laid upon his arm, and he felt himself drawn unresistingly into the chamber of his cousin.

"I know all, dear Eustache," whispered Manette, taking his hand in hers; "I know that they seek to wrong you of your inheritance, on pretence of avenging my injuries and increasing my dowry. But it is not by idle fury that you will do yourself justice. Strive to recover the necessary papers. They *must* exist. My aunt, who is in heaven was not one who would have lived on, smiling and contented, had not the benediction of the church been on her marriage. Sail for the Brazils, cousin; search, and desist not."

"Alas, alas!" interrupted the young man, the tears dropping from his face at sound of the endearing sweetness of her voice, "you speak of this as if it were easy of accomplishment. But how, situated as I am, could I undertake such a task? I have a helpless child—I have the mother of that child, more and less to me than a wife—and scarcely one pitiful coin to purchase food for them during my absence, or forward my own undertaking."

Manette clasped her hands in despair. For the first time she regretted the generous improvidence with which she had already lavished her little

store in pampering the vices of her cousin; and began to blame herself that the industry with which, on finding her coffers empty, she had set her spinning-wheel at work, to repair the threatened want of napery for her marriage household, had not been productive of more extensive results. Five webs of the finest cloth, however, were already laid by in her chest, for which she hoped to find ready purchase; and, by economising her little birthday and fête-day gifts from her father, she had amassed a sum of about five-and-twenty louis, which she now hastened to place in the hands of Eustache.

"Take this," cried she, "for present needs. About as much more I shall shortly be enabled to send to—to—your *family*, if you will afford me an address to which the sum can be safely forwarded. Trust to *me*, cousin, that during your absence, all in my power shall be done for their comforts. But that all, alas! is little; and you must judge for yourself as to the prudence of undertaking an expedition under circumstances and prospects so precarious."

But young Froslin, whose impetuous nature was inflamed to madness by the stigma so unexpectedly thrown upon him, hesitated not in his judgment. With the aid of his kind cousin, every thing appeared feasible. He protested that, with a few louis in his pocket, he could work his pas-

sage out, obtain, in all haste, the needful documents, and return within three months to claim his inheritance, and renew his enthusiastic acknowledgments to the most generous of women. Delay could only injure his cause. He would instantly depart for Hâvre, and from Hâvre set sail by the first opportunity, leaving to the mercy of Manette his child and its mother.

Such were the projects, accordingly, with which he departed from Trois-Fresnes;—and while the elder Eustache took possession of the dismembered moiety of the farm, and received the congratulations of his neighbours, who had been easily won to his party by disgust at the excesses of his nephew, the younger departed from his native country; and Manette, satisfied that the unfortunate objects of her care were, for a time, secure from want, began to take her measures for the future. It happened that a rich cousin of her mother, residing in the neighbourhood of Evreux, had often claimed a visit from Mademoiselle Froslin; and now that her hand was known to be free from engagements, a pressing invitation was again despatched; and her father, hoping her attention might be distracted from the recent disasters of the family by a short absence from home, and perhaps by the devotions of the handsome son and heir of her cousin Leclercq, seconded the project. Even Manette, actuated by views of her

own, acquiesced in the plan; and Père Froslin escorted her to Evreux, little suspecting that her somewhat capacious trunk contained the fruits of his daughter's housewifely industry for the last twelve months, which she had made up her mind to dispose of for the benefit of the distressed family of his nephew. It proved no easy matter, however, for the young heiress, vigilantly watched and courted, to put her design into execution. The family she was visiting occupied a considerable farm about a league from the town, and consisted of an elderly couple, who rarely quitted home, and an only son, who, after Manette's domestication under their roof, appeared to have become as little locomotive as themselves. All she could do, was to wait for an opportunity, when Isidore Leclercq might be compelled, by business, to absent himself for a day; and this happy occasion having at length presented itself, she no sooner saw him depart, than she petitioned her relatives to allow her the attendance of one of the farm damsels, named Augustine, to assist her in the execution of some commissions in the town.

Madame Leclercq, having vainly advised her fair relative to defer her project to some future day, when Isidore might offer himself as her escort, readily assented. She even tendered the use of the stout Norman pony, on which she was accustomed to perform her own marketings at

Evreux; and right glad was Manette, when with the bedizened and happy-faced Augustine trudging by her side, and her package strapped on before her, she paced into the busy city—caring little what any might think of her mode of proceeding, so its object proved successful.

"*Pardine! Nous voilà bien heureuses, Ma'mselle Manette,*" cried her light-hearted attendant, as they approached the suburbs—"See, if it be not the famous *Marché aux Cheveux* of Evreux! —and I to have forgotten it, this blessed morning!"

"You mean the *Marché aux Chevaux*," replied Manette, attributing the blunder to the *patois* dialect of her companion.

"*Nenni, nenni!*" persisted Augustine—"there are no horses in the case! I mean the HAIR-FAIR. But I forgot that Ma'mselle is a stranger in Evreux; and, maybe, does not know that, every spring, about Whitsuntide, all the peruquiers of Paris arrive in Normandy, to buy up every fine head of hair they can lay their hands on. The great ladies at court, it seems are envious of the rich *chignons* of the girls of Normandy and Brittany; and cannot fancy that God Almighty designed to make us better looking than our neighbours, for any other purpose than to sell them all we have in our power to sell, in order to trick them out—silly creatures!—for their balls

and junketings. And so, Ma'mselle, the poorest among us, who happen to be out of fortune or out of place, are often glad to obtain a month's meals, by sacrificing the very hair of our heads to buy bread for ourselves or our parents."

"You do well," replied Mademoiselle Froslin, gravely. "After all, what signifies a heavy roll of hair, unless to make our heads ache, and take up our time to take care of it?"

"Ah, Ma'mselle! even you, little as you care for such things, would not be so fond of giving up your fine glossy chesnut *chignon*—an ell long, if it is an inch," retorted Augustine; "more particularly, since Monsieur Isidore, our handsome young master, protests that it is the longest and finest in Normandy. Well, well! It *does* sometimes serve to make me laugh, to think that the trapesing court ladies are obliged to borrow their beauty from us poor villagers; and that, perhaps, some gay Duchess is flaunting away beside his Majesty the Emperor's throne, tricked out in a wig that grew out of the head of my cousin, Babet—the girl who tends the farmer's fowls yonder, up at Sièvre Moulin, with cheeks speckled like one of her own turkey-eggs. Ho! ho! ho! Only consider, *chère Mam'selle*, if my cousin, Babet, could but stand face to face with the fine lady, in her satins, and furbelows, and false curls, and claim her own again!"

"Better purchase from the living," replied Manette, "than wear, as many are known to do, the spoil of the churchyard! Half the locks that bedizen the fine ladies of Paris, are said to be shorn from the heads of corpses, while the damps of death lie heavy in their dim tresses!"

But the conversation of the two damsels was now interrupted. They had reached the market-place, where assembled in their holiday attire, stood groups of peasant girls, waiting to expose their heads of hair to the chaffering of the spruce Parisian hair-merchants; while, here and there, some fusty Jew strove to forstal the bargain, by making himself middle-man betwixt the rich hair-dresser of the Rue St. Honoré, and the simple Cauchoise in her coif. The buyers and sellers were already in active traffic: the girls, with their high caps laid aside, exposing to the rating of the merchants their long glistening locks; some, with a panting and mortified air, at the notion of this fatal resignation of their attractions; others smiling broadly at the notion of exchanging that which, like the summer grass must needs spring up and flourish again, for bright silver crowns, tangible and permanent. Many, too, were the jests exchanged among the throng of idlers, lounging in the market-place, as each girl successively presenting herself, attempted to keep up the price of the merchan-

dize; while the chapman, whose business was depreciation, pointed out some stray grey hair, which toil or trouble had introduced upon the youthful head. One *chignon* was regretted as lacking length, another gloss, another thickness; one was derided as too coarse, one as too foxy.

But Manette, intent upon her own errand, had little leisure to bestow upon the peculiar and characteristic scene; and, taking her way towards the shop of one of the chief linendrapers of the town, proceeded, not without much awkwardness and hesitation, to commence her negociations. She was informed, however, with more celerity than courtesy, that it was not the custom of the place to enter into retail traffickings; the draper explicitly stated that he was in the habit of supplying himself wholesale, and direct from the manufactories. Abashed for a moment, Mademoiselle Froslin was about to depart and try her luck elsewhere; but having reflected that the same plea would probably meet her in every other shop, she entreated, with a blushing face, that the draper would only deign to look at her tablecloths and sheeting, which she knew to be of remarkable excellence and beauty, professing herself ready to submit to a considerable loss in parting with the webs. Her pleading was, in fact, so earnest, that the man could no longer resist; nor, on examining the goods tendered to

him, was he any longer desirous of resistance. He declared himself willing to purchase the homespun, if offered at a moderate price, for the use of his own family; and a bargain was quickly struck, Manette submitting to what the advertising shops of London term "a tremendous sacrifice," in order to possess herself of the six hundred and fifty francs, for which she had so pressing an occasion.

"I could wish the young lady had been disposed to enter into a negociation with *me* rather than with *you*," observed a well-dressed man, who, unobserved of Manette, had been a bystander, while the draper was counting out his money; and, on her turning with a look of dissatisfaction towards the interloper, a few words of explanation from her civil customer served to introduce the stranger as his brother—a celebrated Parisian *coëffeur*—one of the chief supporters of the Hair-Fair of Evreux.

"You do not suppose, *mon cher Edouard*," observed the linen draper with a facetious smile, "that a young lady of the *tournure* of Mademoiselle would condescend to disfigure herself in order to embellish your wig-blocks in the Chaussée d'Antin?"

"I suppose nothing," replied the perruquier, with a profound bow, still casting a professional eye upon the beautiful chestnut *chignon*, revealing

itself below the rich lace-cap of Manette. "I only mean to say that, had the young lady been disposed to part with her hair, (which happens to be the exact shade of that of the beautiful Countess de C———, a great favourite of a certain illustrious personage, who, having lately lost hers by a fever, has commissioned me to make her half-a-dozen *coëffures* of the same colour,) I would willingly give a handsome sum for her *chignon*."

"I am not, I own, disposed to part with my hair," replied Manette, good-humouredly; "nevertheless, the time *might* come when—I—in short, I shall be greatly obliged to this gentleman to afford me the means of writing to him, in case I should ever be inclined to profit by his obliging offer;"—and having ascertained, by a glance towards the door, that Augustine was too deeply engaged by gaping at the market, and tending her pony, to take note of what was passing within, Mademoiselle Froslin proceeded to unfold, to the admiration of the fashionable *coëffeur*, the immense length of her beautiful *chevelure*; and a conditional bargain was struck between them, that should she, at some future time, incline to dispose of it, Monsieur Edouard would readily become the purchaser.

And now her riches in her pocket, and the main

object of her visit to her cousin Leclercq happily accomplished, Manette was in all haste to return to Trois-Fresnes; and, though she found herself in high disgrace at home, from having, on quitting Evreux, peremptorily declined the overtures of Isidore and his family for her hand, her heart was at ease with itself; for she had already despatched to the destitute family the means of existence for the period of her cousin's absence.

That term at length expired, however; and another,and another month, and he returned not! It was in vain that Manette Froslin deprived herself successively of all her little personal ornaments—of her clothes, of the needle-work which she had toiled many a long winter's night to complete—that it might be secretly disposed of for the benefit the family of Eustache.

Still did they lack and suffer hunger; till having exhausted all her resources, the noble-spirited girl, on learning from the private communications she had established with Hâvre, that the miserable object of her cousin's seduction was sinking under a deep decline, threw herself upon the kindness of her parents, and implored their assistance and charity for the dying woman.

The price put by her father and mother on their acquiescence, was, however, too heavy to be paid even by Manette. They exacted her promise to

unite herself, at no distant period, with their rich kinsman, Isidore Leclercq; and she felt the sacrifice to be impossible.

It was in vain she remonstrated, wept, implored, and represented the cruel urgency of the case —Père Froslin was inflexible.

A singular change of appearance soon became perceptible in the heiress of Trois-Fresnes:—a single curl of chestnut hair waved on either side her fine open forehead; but her rich *chignon* was missing! With many a bitter reproach did her angry parents question her concerning the disappearance of this indispensible accessory to the Norman toilet; but Manette remained obstinately silent; and, amid all their revilings, her countenance was cheered by a gleam of mournful satisfaction at the certainty that the wants of the expiring woman had been relieved by the receipt of ten louis from Monsieur Edouard of Paris. For a time, therefore, she was relieved from the necessity of renewing her appeal to the compassion of her father and mother.

Nor was there further occasion for the attempt. At the moment the price of her generous sacrifice reached Hâvre, Eustache was striving to soften the agonies of death for one whom he had arrived in time to support with his presence in her last moments. The kindness of his cousin was made known to him by those dying lips; nor could the

intelligence that, although he had failed in the essential object of his voyage, he had been raised to wealth and independence as the recognised heir of a childless brother of his late mother, suffice to arrest the progress of prolonged disease.

Released, by this melancholy event, from his degrading entanglements, and sobered into a sadder and wiser man, Eustache suffered six months to elapse before he presented himself at Trois-Fresnes; and the love he entertained for his noble-minded cousin must have been great indeed, since it had enabled him to overcome even his resentment against his uncle and Madame Eustache.

Conscious, perhaps, that they had some plea for their animosity, in the desire to avenge his desertion of their child, he disposed himself, as far as possible, to amicable feelings; and, in the course of a day or two, when seated once more before the well-known fireside, and holding in his the hand of Manette, (who had already promised to become a mother to his little Isabella,) he frankly coincided in his gentle cousin's proposal, that—"bygones should be bygones."

The wedding was a merry wedding—the marriage a happy marriage; and even now, that Manette Froslin's glossy tresses have regained more than half their former length, and all their former beauty, Eustache—who has inherited the princely fortune of his Brazilian uncle, and replaced, with

sparkling gems, the simple gold cross and earrings she formerly sacrificed for his sake—protests that his beloved wife never looked so fair in his eyes as when the short thick curls mantled closely round her slender neck, exhibiting a silent but affecting record in his eyes of her errand of womanly mercy to the HAIR-MARKET OF EVREUX.

THE END.

LONDON:
SCHULZE AND CO. POLAND STREET.

MR. COLBURN'S NEW WORKS.

I.

THE HUSSAR.

By the Author of "The Subaltern," &c. 2 vols.

"Few will rise from the perusal of Mr. Gleig's new work without feelings of the highest gratification. A more exciting work has not appeared for a long time."—*Sun.*

II.

HUMAN LIFE.

By the Author of "Tremaine" and "De Vere."

NEW EDITION, in 3 vols. Post 8vo.

"A most delightful work, abounding, like 'Tremaine,' in beautiful descriptions, and, like 'De Vere,' in strong and lively pictures of human character in the different varieties of life."—*Messenger.*

III.

THE PEERESS.

EDITED BY LADY CHARLOTTE BURY.

New Edition. 3 vols. post 8vo.

"This is an extraordinarily clever book. The writer has a great talent for description and the sketching of characters, and is gifted with great sense and judgment. In the course of the work we are introduced to the private lives of Fox, Burke, Sheridan, and all the illustrious characters of that memorable era, and we are equally familiarised with the galaxy of fashion, when the Prince of Wales was considered the acmé of grace and elegance."—*Dispatch.*

IV.

PICCIOLA.

THE PRISONER OF FENESTRELLA,

OR CAPTIVITY CAPTIVE.

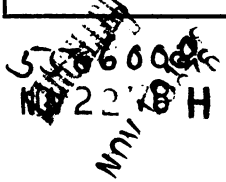
2 vols. post 8vo. 16s.

"For this beautiful little novel we may venture to predict a degree of popularity in the English world of letters equal to that enjoyed by 'Paul and Virginia,' 'Elizabeth,' and one or two other favourites. It is a production for every class and for every shade of taste."—*Court Journal.*

This book should be returned to the Library on or before the last date stamped below.

A fine of five cents a day is incurred by retaining it beyond the specified time.

Please return promptly.



3· 2044 090 343 690·